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MY NOTE-BOOK

FRAGMENTARY STUDIES IN THEOLOGY

AND SUBJECTS ADJACENT THERETO

BY

AUSTIN PHELPS, D.D., LL.D.

WITH A PORTRAIT

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PREFACE.

By far the major portion of every man's thinking is fragmentary. The best thinking of some men is so. They are seers of transient and disconnected vision. An educated man who practises literary frugality in preserving the ideas suggested by his reading, will find, after years of professional service, an accumulation of them, in which he will recognize some of the most robust products of his brain. Some of them will affect him with a sense of loss, because he has not been able to amplify them in monograph or volume.

Some men find an outlet for such thinking in brilliant colloquy. Their friendship is a literary treasure to other men. Hence have come such volumes as Eckermann's "Conversations with Goethe," and Coleridge's "Table-Talk." Others improve their moods of facile expression by recording their most suggestive fragmentary studies for their own gratification, or for future use. Hence we have such books as Pascal's "Thoughts" and Southey's "Commonplace-Book" and Hawthorne's "Notes." Occasionally such materials find their way into a literary mosaic of

mingled philosophy and fiction, of which a masterpiece is "The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table," by Dr. Holmes. President Edwards once lamented an interruption of his morning studies, because it had expelled from his memory a single thought which he might never think again.

These remarks are suggested by the origin and resources of the present volume. It is literally what its title indicates. Its contents are a selection from the accumulated memoranda of forty years. A portion of them have been partially developed and published in essays which are now out of print. A larger portion is made up of unpublished material. They make no claim to originality in any other sense than that in which every educated man's best thinking is original *to him.* It will be seen that in the selection I have often had in mind the necessities of young preachers in the early years of their ministry. Without conscious plagiarism on the part of the author, these thoughts are offered to readers for just what they are, — "Fragments from my Note-Book."

A. P.

Bar Harbor, October 1, 1890.

NOTE.

THE peculiar interest which attaches to last things belongs to these pages.

A letter from his publishers, acknowledging the receipt of the manuscript of "My Note-Book," was the last which was read to my Father. Death, the great enhancer of values, had already touched him; and his work doth follow him.

The duty of superintending the passage of this volume through the press has fallen upon myself; but the service has been chiefly that of a proof-reader. His clearness of purpose, exactness of method, even the well-known beauty of that chirography which was always the delight of his printers, have made these labors as light as the anxiety to have everything as *he* would wish it may permit. The book was finished in every sense of the word by its author; and but few changes have been required of the text by the practical necessities of publication.

To those who knew anything of his long illness, it is almost incredible that he should have labored as he did, to the utter end. Like any well man, he dropped at his post.

It is impossible that any word of mine can add to the tenderness or to the loyalty with which his old pupils and friends will use their final opportunity to study a new expression of his ripened thought and spiritual refinement. "If I can only live till this book is done, I shall be content to go," he wrote to a friend. When he could say this, — he who did not speak of his own work, and seldom of his own death, — it was time for God to grant him his wish. So it was given him.

ELIZABETH STUART PHELPS WARD.

NEWTON HIGHLANDS, MASS.,
November, 1890.

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MY NOTE-BOOK.

I.

FRAGMENTARY STUDIES IN THEOLOGY. I.

1. All good governments work largely on the principle of *non-intervention.* Other things being equal, that is the best government which most liberally lets subject or citizen alone. International law achieves its chief end if it compels nation to let nation alone. Federal republics forbid encroachment of State upon State, of county upon county, of city upon city. Municipal police prohibits intrusion of family upon family, of man upon man. The old English law which said, "Every man's house is his castle," delivered one of the first principles of civilization. Without it, civilization would not be. Parental government restrains trespass of child upon child, of servant upon servant. Through the whole range of authority, he governs best who governs least.

2. It is marvellous, when we put our minds to it, how little government has to do with any of us. In the main drift of life we help ourselves, we

attend to our own business, come and go as we please, fall by a law of elective affinities into societies of kindred, of trade, of literature, of politics, and the thing which gives its solid cubic strength to civilized order is that no man says, Why do ye so? When these things cease to be, we go to the almshouse or the penitentiary. There government pure and simple holds us in the clutch of power.

The ultimate idea on which society at its best forms itself seems to be to insulate the individual, so far as may be needful, to enable him to live his own life, to build up his own fortune, to do his own thinking, to form his own opinions, to create his own character; in a word, to be himself, come what may of it. Around this idea, all good government revolves in concentric circles. The chief good which government achieves is to contrive how not to govern.

3. Does not the same principle find more majestic evolution in the government of God? One of the first impressions, and the most durable, which we receive from the phenomena of nature is that of the non-intervention of the creative Mind. Having set the wheels of the universe in rotation, God seems to leave them to revolve by their own secret springs and with their own momentum. Whatever may be the occult fact at the centre of things, this is the look of them to our vision of the circumference. The planets, so far as we know, are islands in an ethereal ocean, which no keel navigates. No electric cable has flashed a syllable of

salutation from one to its nearest neighbor. And this is an emblem of the *insular* policy which appears to rule the relations of man to the laws of nature. He is left alone to adjust himself to their stupendous forces as he can.

4. This policy of insulation is often tragic in its working. That does not induce its abandonment or suspension. Evil of appalling magnitude falls on men under the merciless operation of nature's laws, and God seems to look on in as merciless repose. Cities are devastated by conflagrations, and nations are decimated by pestilence, as if sentient beings were of no more worth than mushrooms. The earthquake at Ischia, a few years ago, buried two thousand people in a night, as if they were so many animalcules. Cyclones plough a furrow of death through a crowded population as if a city of human homes were of no more account in the universe than a beehive. A waterspout in mid-ocean sinks a ship in twenty minutes as if its immortal freight had no more dignity than an out-heap. A spark of fire which one raindrop could extinguish sets ablaze a railroad bridge at midnight, and in the morning the city of Peoria sends up a cry to Heaven, like that which went up from the banks of the Nile, when in all the land not a house stood in which there was not one dead. A father caught in a Western blizzard buries his little son in the snow, and lays himself down to die with apparently no friend in the universe more helpful than his Newfoundland dog.

5. So it looks to our blinking vision. Fire here, and snow there, the very elements which make the comfort and beauty of our winter homes, go forth at some voiceless bidding like angels of retribution. Some of these fatal phenomena appear to come to pass with no compensating good in the end. Of the reptilian species, some have been created for whose existence no reason can be given, it should seem, but a malign purpose. Among our fellow-creatures we discover cobras and rattlesnakes. God has concocted venom. He has contrived a marvellous animal machinery for its ejection. In consequence, twenty-two thousand human beings lost their lives in India in the year 1886.

6. These symbols of evil accumulate, and catastrophes pile themselves up in human history, and He who holds the universe in the hollow of His hand appears to hide Himself in some cavern of reserve. He sends out no countermands. He provides no reversals or suspensions of natural laws. So absolute is His concealment and so still is His footfall, that men plausibly ask, "Who is God? What is God? Where is God? *Is* there any God? How can He look on such colossal tragedies and be still?"

7. Atheism finds its capital argument in the concealments and silences of God. The argument is by no means insignificant. We all find that within us which gave birth to the Egyptian Sphynx. We cannot deny that there is an abysmal depth of mystery in this Divine seclusion. Some inscruta-

ble necessity exists for giving to the system of things as we look at it, on the *under* side of the universe, the aspect of a government of chance.

8. Yet Christian believers are no more responsible than other men for a solution of the mystery. Our sacred books do not create the facts. There they lie patent, not even *between* the lines of natural laws and their intersection with human history. History and law make no secret of them. One system of religious thought is as much bound to respond to atheistic corollaries as another. If we have no response to give, we are all balked by the dread dilemma, "A malign God or no God!"

9. But suppose that we discover a *law* of non-intervention, operating by Divine decree, threading the sinuosities of all government alike, and founded in the nature of the things concerned. Suppose that without it man cannot *be* a man in the fulness of Divine ideal. Do we not discover at least one glint of light playing over the abyss of mystery, which but just now was the very blackness of darkness? Especially does it illumine many of the dark things occurring under natural law, by disclosing for them a moral reason. It is a step in a triumphal march into the reasons of things when for a natural evil we can discern a moral cause, or declare a moral fact as the reason why.

10. It should not surprise us then if we find the principle of non-intervention in God's moral government. In the probationary administration of this world He certainly appears, within a limited

range of working, to have chosen an insular policy. The isolated locality of the globe which we inhabit necessitates, as it respects the rest of the populated universe, a moral seclusion. Who knows what auxiliary alliances might be available for our moral security if no impassable gulf held this world aloof from our brethren of the stars? In size and astronomical conditions the earth seems to be vastly inferior to Jupiter. That planet may be as magnificently its superior in the rank of quality and moral force of its population. What protective battalions of spiritual power might we not summon to our aid in crises of the conflict with evil, if the insulation of the planets could be suspended!

Every human mind too is a walled city. Its gates are closed at will to every fellow-mind. Silence barricades its history against the world. An autocracy of moral government administered by a Divine vice-regency is going on within its insulated realm. Who knoweth the *spirit* of a man? One criminal at the bar of human justice can defy the judicial inquisition of an Empire.

11. Pursuing into details man's discipline by seclusion, we discover evidences of an intricate yet well-defined plan of God, in many things to let him alone. He accumulates and interweaves, limits and extends his own habits. No other than he is permitted to fashion the mould of his own character. He it is who holds supreme command of ante-natal tendencies and inherited conditions.

No power from outside puts constraint upon his birthright of moral freedom. His is the strategy which brings to pass its conquests and its failures. His very opinions are largely the creations of his own will. He sees what he chooses to see. No amount of evidence for truth or falsehood is irresistible. Fichte says: "We do not will as we reason; we reason as we will." For weal or for woe, man must work out his own destiny. It is fixed as the order of the stars. He must *be* himself whatever may come of it. This appears to be the law of probationary conditions.

12. The severity and constancy of temptation, so far as we can see, make no break in the Divine law of non-intervention. Every human life, in one aspect of it, is one prolonged temptation. Probationary government would be a nullity but for this constitutional element of temptation. The thing which makes it what it is, is temptation. Without this, it might be existence; it might be education; it might be growth; but it could not be probation. This sinister factor in man's destiny often coils itself secretly in his pathway, and in some forms it springs upon him with the suddenness and the venom of a rattlesnake.

13. A singular resemblance exists in the development of evil, between the natural and the probationary governments. So striking is the likeness that natural phenomena are the most truthful emblems of probationary catastrophes. God often suffers evil to grow to its malign maturity in the

two departments of matter and of mind alike, with no counteractive force from Him in either. The argument therefore is one of exact analogy. The brunt of it is this: why should not the same principle which we find so abundantly and often so disastrously working in the kingdom of nature be looked for in the moral kingdom?

14. A historic example will emphasize the argument. Many years ago a tidal wave on the coast of Norway buried a score or more of human homes. It sent cradles with their sleeping freight out to sea at midnight. Infinite benevolence did not "scotch" the wheels of planets and their satellites to forestall the tragedy. Why may not the same benevolence see reasons for refraining from placing let or hindrance in the way which a human being on trial for eternity has chosen to his own hurt? Who knows enough of God's realm of reserve, wherein are stored infinite things and infinite reasons of things, to affirm that it may not?

Who knows that man's moral personality may not depend upon such non-action on the part of God? Who knows that he can *be* a man, full-grown, of finished character, of crystallized virtue, consolidated and secure through all the coming cycles in his loyalty to God without some such experience of moral isolation? Who has ever penetrated the concealments and silences of God far enough to discover that non-intervention on His part is not as just, as wide, as good, in the one phenomenon as in the other?

15. An incident in natural history is strikingly emblematic of certain facts of probationary government.

The geographical text-book of our schools fifty years ago contained a rude woodcut, representing an anaconda coiled around the body of a passing traveller, whose life-blood it was crushing out. It was a picture of peril in the wilds of South America. When the scene there pictured took place, infinite wisdom did not interpose to stifle the murderous appetite of the reptile. Infinite benevolence did not send a shaft of lightning to paralyze its contractile muscles. Reptile and man were left to fight their own duel. The chances were hideously in favor of the reptile.

Why may not the same wisdom and benevolence have reasons inscrutable, perhaps inconceivable, to us, for standing aloof while temptation springs upon a man in his youth and coils itself in evil habits around his manhood, and crushes out all good from his nature in the end? Why may not the purposes of probation require that, within a certain range of destiny, tempter and tempted shall be left to fight their own duel? Why should it stagger our faith if fearful chances are on the side of the tempter? Who is learned enough in the secret ways of God to say that this cannot be?

16. Observe the analogy on a broader scale, of more terrific significance and moral suggestion. Between A.D. 250 and A.D. 262 a pestilence raged over the whole Roman Empire. From Egypt to

the Hebrides and from the Hebrides to Egypt, forth and back and forth again, under laws of nature which were then more mysterious than eclipses, epidemic death trampled the nations in its fury. Believing men saw in it the avenging angel of the Apocalypse. Unbelievers beheld in it a maniacal Fate. Both took it as a sign that the world was drawing near its end. Medical science was paralyzed. Men died like flies. Gibbon says that statisticians of the succeeding age estimated that half the human race perished in those twelve years. In some of the Italian cities from three-fourths to four-fifths of the population disappeared. Neither wisdom nor benevolence from on high interposed to roll back the tide of death. Then occurred one of the awful concealments of God. Men sought Him the world over and He was not found. Men were struck down in the very act of fasting and prayer for His discovery.

17. Why then may not the same benevolence and wisdom retire into more fearful hiding when nations rage in the fury of their passions and rot in the ulceration of their vices? Why may not non-intervention on the part of God be as wise, as just, as good in the one case as in the other? Are moral causes and effects ruled by laws so widely diverse from those of nature? Who knows that? Where is the proof? Who has explored the realm of Divine reserve far enough to discover the fact? Let philosophy explain, in its relation to moral laws, the destruction of half the world

under the Roman sway, and we can explain as philosophically the antediluvian corruption for which God repented that He had made man upon the earth.

18. The analogy between the two kingdoms is impressive in another feature of Divine procedures. Non-intervention in the administration of probationary discipline is *intermittent* in its development. We discover it here and not there, now and not then. An element of sovereignty is visible. He hath mercy on whom He will have mercy. But neither is the principle in question uniform in God's methods of procedure under the laws of nature. There, too, it is intermittent. In her treatment of man Nature is very kindly in some things; in others she is very cruel. In some phenomena we call her "Mother Nature." In others she exhibits her fangs and the spring of a tiger. Our own poet sings of the "*stern* motherhood of the sea." The picture as a whole is one of mingled light and shade. It is a work of *chiaro-oscuro*.

19. In like manner, in probationary discipline, God interposes the suasions of truth and grace to balance and often to overbalance the forces of temptation. Yet again He retires apparently into close-barred seclusion, and the tempter has his way with the tempted in ruin and desolation. Even in the supreme disclosures of Divine love an occult necessity seems to exist, that redemptive decrees shall be so executed as to put on the look of a

government of chance. One is taken and another left. If, then, the one system expresses wisdom and benevolence, why not the other? Who is the expert so accomplished in knowledge of the Most High that he can venture to affirm that it does not?

20. We call the Divine silences mysteries, and they are such. Yet this principle of non-intervention is not entirely inexplicable even to our purblind vision. A certain cognate principle gives us a hint of the possible — may we not say probable? — explanation of it in part. It is that in all the departments of God's government we detect signs of *aspiration.* His wisdom is not content with a creation of low grade. His beneficence is not satisfied with products of inferior quality. Always, in the final outcome He aims at best things.

21. This element of Divine aspiration may underlie, we know not how broadly or profoundly, the mystery of non-intervention in moral government. Here as elsewhere it is to be presumed, and we discern it in evidence, that God aims at a creation of superlative excellence. He deals in supreme things. He is not content with a universe of imbeciles. His ideal would not be realized in a race of moral dwarfs and cripples. Infantile being is not His ultimate thought. Innocence is not His supreme model. A universe of lambs and humming-birds and ring-doves might be that. He aims at the production of a race of beings who shall be susceptible of character, of diversified character, of

robust character, of self-contained, self-reliant, crystallized character, — character at once consolidated and pure. What else can be the object of probationary discipline?

22. Who then knows enough of the occult and complicated and hereditary processes by which God devolops to its maturity the character of a moral universe to say that it *can* realize the ideal of Divine aspirations, without a discipline conducted to a greater or less extent in moral insulation? Who can affirm, and give infinite reasons for it, that insular planets, and untraversed oceans, and undiscovered continents, and races segregated by contrasts of color, and nations walled apart by confusion of tongues, and tribes alienated by invincible antagonisms, and minds shut into bodies which tell no secrets, and reserves of speechless thought, and powers of silence which do not yield to rack and thumb-screw, even capabilities of concealed virtue and latent guilt, are not in the nature of things essential conditions of a moral system which shall realize its Divine ideal, and bring to pass its ultimate possibilities of being and endeavor?

Again, who knows that man can *be* a man, deserving to bear the image of his Creator, if he is not, in some of the conditions of his moral trial, *let alone* to exercise his moral sovereignty, and develop his godlike personality by himself? One must be very knowing in the reserves of God's thoughts, in which the infinite reasons of things

interplay before one can say yes or no to such a stupendous inquiry.

23. Critics of Bishop Butler's "Analogy of Religion to the Constitution and Course of Nature" have objected to its masterly argument, that it proves nothing but the crass ignorance of man. The same criticism may lie against all our reasonings upon the partial non-intervention of God in human destiny. It is true, they begin and end with an interrogative. The chief thing we know is that we do not know. In researches into the far-away interior of the Divine economy, the discovery of our ignorance is the discovery of a great deal. To know that we do not know is to know much to the purpose.

24. From such a discovery practical corollaries follow. It follows that we must not condemn a system of things of which we *know* nothing. This stands to reason. It follows that we must not distrust a *Being* in procedures of which we know nothing. This stands to justice. A truism covers all such investigations into the ways of God. It is that a realm of the unknown, fathomless, and boundless lies athwart our track of inquiry. Its phenomena and its laws may be inconceivable by human faculties, and therefore unknown. They may be inexpressible in human dialects, and therefore unrevealed.

In that impenetrable realm, God revolves the infinite possibilities of creation. There is His kingdom of reserve. There is the place of His hiding.

There is the cause of His silences. Our province is to stand on its border, ourselves also in believing silence. We believe what we do know; we are silent upon what we do not know. Our knowledge is infinitesimal as compared with our ignorance. We reproduce in our researches the experience of Newton gathering his few pebbles on the shore of an untraversed ocean.

25. In our treatment of the principle of non-intervention in the Divine government, the fact should be emphasized that the phenomena on which the principle is founded cannot be denied. They exist whether we can solve their mystery or not. They need no proof. Silence and history are surcharged with them.

Moreover, they are among the elementary teachings of our experience of the world we live in, and of the system of things which encloses us. We very soon discover the fact that the Divine government, in both the natural and the moral kingdoms, is threaded by an element of *tragedy*. Its lurid lines cross and recross the map of every human life. An infant on whose mundane existence the sun rises and sets but once does not escape the sinister decree. It comes into the world, the unconscious herald of suffering. It goes out of the world under a law of pain and dissolution which is itself a stupendous war upon nature before which all generations of men have stood aghast.

We must concede these facts to *be* facts indis-

putable. We must admit also, that, considered by themselves alone, they give a malign aspect to the system of things in which we live and of which we form a part. So much, be the consequence what it may, must be conceded by an honest believer to an honest Atheist. No moral intuitions are of any avail to set aside the facts in question as non-existent. The line of denial is the line of absurdity. To say, as one objector has done, "Proof or no proof, it is not true," is insane.

26. Moreover, it is unwise policy to ignore these phenomena by burying them in a bottomless abyss of mystery, and leaving them there. This is the disposal made of them by many devout believers. The facts are stolidly let alone.

A Professor of theology in the city of New York, on an occasion which brought before his theological class for discussion one of the recondite problems now in question, said in substance: "I have a bag of incomprehensibles in which I deposit all such inquiries unanswered. I store them there; affirming nothing, denying nothing, believing nothing." He might consistently have capped the climax, as a free-thinking President of a college in South Carolina once did, by adding, "and caring nothing."

27. The *dictum* of the theological seer expressed the mental habit, perhaps of the majority of believers when confronted with the "dark things" in which God seems to have retired into a kingdom of oblivion. To many, that which they call their

"faith" appears to be reverently expressed by this unreasoning trust. But this is not faith. It is intellectual lethargy. It presupposes shallow thinking and flabby moral fibre. In every highly organized character there are certain robust graces to which it is a laxative and a destructive.

28. The working of such inert and stolid faith in the conflict of Christianity with Atheism is still more disastrous. It is treacherous. It permits atheistic bravado to beg the whole question of the Divine existence. Atheism revels in these unsolved enigmas. The alternative with which it plausibly blocks the way of the Christian argument is: "A malignant Creator or no Creator." The human mind, if pressed by this dilemma, will never hesitate long in its election. None but a frenzied conscience ever made obeisance to a malign Deity. As intelligent Theists then we *must* say something of these repellent anomalies which no sane man can deny. *What* shall we say for the faith that is in us?

29. A few thoughtful minds find relief from the sinister look which the "dark things" of Nature and of Providence give to the government of God, in the doctrine of a "Pre-existent State" of which the phenomena in question are a disciplinary sequence.

Of this hypothesis, several things may be briefly noted. One is that the fact of an ante-mundane life in the history of man is at best, in the formula of Scotch jurisprudence, "not proven." A second

is that till the *memory* of somebody renders it a practical fact if it *is* proven, we can afford to wait. A third is that as a possible hypothesis it is no solution of the mystery. It only shows the problem one stage farther back in the history of the moral universe. It leaves our obstinate questionings unanswered, and in darkness as compact as ever.

A fourth is a fact which one whispers under breath. It is that, with profound deference to the retrospective and far-seeing thinkers who find repose in this anomalous theory, one cannot rid oneself of the sense of a certain comical incongruity involved in it. A truthful theory in religious thought confirms its truth by the dignity of its associations of theory with fact. Tried by this test the hypothesis of an ante-mundane period in the history of man must be accepted, if at all, under an æsthetic protest.

30. Here, for example, is a new-born infant who by the conditions of the hypothesis may *as* probably be ten thousand years old as ten minutes. The memory of man runneth not to the contrary. Now is it credible that this pitiable puny creature — this homœopathic attenuation of moral being — this microscopic iota of thinking power — expressing less intelligence than a semicolon, and in action immeasurably less than a honey-bee — is it conceivable that this yet nameless thing which we call "It" — has come into this world bending under the colossal burden and the unrivalled honor of such a venerable antiquity? Which

element preponderates in such a discovery in anthropology — the improbable or the risible? Shall one controvert it or smile at it?

31. Passing from hypothesis to facts, we find much to the purpose of relieving the dark things of nature and of providence in the discovery that they are diminutively *exceptional* in their occurrence. They are not the prevailing expression of the Divine Mind. They are but a fragment of the warp and woof of the plan of the universe. Neither do they present the look of *eager* design. They do not appear as if God delighted in them for their own sake. Where do we find in them the profusion which we discover in the beauty of this world's adornments, and the sublimity of its nocturnal skies? The terrific shock which they give to our sensibilities is largely the shock of contrast with their magnificent and beneficent surroundings.

32. Artists tell us that paintings in mezzotint should be set in golden frames. In the material world something like this is witnessed in the accompaniments of the shocking phenomena evolved by the forces of nature. Those mysterious aliens to the work of a benign Creator are set in the framework of a world of exceeding beauty. The first impression and the last that is made upon the mind of a philosophic observer, is that in its original and Divine ideal this world was meant to be a happy world. So far as should be in keeping with its moral design as the arena of a probationary

government and of the recovery of a fallen race, it was designed to be the abode of beings dwelling in communion with God.

He who out of His own serene consciousness evolved a world of such exceeding loveliness, and then planted in the soul of the being to whom He gave dominion over it the *Greek* idea of Beauty, *must* be a benign Creator. So have men reasoned from the beginning, and so will they reason till the end.

33. It is in the lap of such a world that we discover the few anomalies, thrown in as if at random, which put our faith on trial. So infinitesimally exceptional do they appear, that on the broad and long scale of observation, a devout looker-on cannot help exclaiming, "He hath made *everything* beautiful in His time." True, the exceptions are dark — very dark. To one who will have it so they make their author look evil-minded. Yet a moss rosebud is a triumphant respondent to them all. Is an African desert a blotch on the face of a world of beauty? Aye, but how much more resplendent is the moral idea conveyed by the daisy which was foreordained to bloom there for the glazing eye of Mungo Park!

34. The supreme argument in the Christian theory of the mysteries in question is discovered when we lift them up into the plane of their moral uses. God's ultimate designs are moral designs. His ultimate reasons are moral reasons. Therefore, we always let in some glint of light on a por-

tentous development of evil when we can find a moral aim in the use of it by Divine adjustments and counteractions.

For example, of all the phenomena in human destiny, no other is of such abysmal blackness as the phenomenon of death. Does it not then give dignity to our sacred books that they discover a moral significance in this primal curse? They record a credible narrative of its origin. They tell us of its symbolic meaning — why it has been and must be, and by whose benignant conquest it will be blotted out. They make it a memento of a great moral catastrophe. As an incident to the discipline and the symbolism of a fallen world, it is dense with moral design. As an incident to the recovery of a redeemed world, it is luminous with Divine benignity. Thus it is that by interpreting shocking and mysterious phenomena as devices of moral government, and symbols of a history of sin, we discover somewhat of God's mind in them. We find that they have moral uses which make them worthy of God — even Godlike.

35. To appreciate the full significance of the principle of moral usefulness in stupendous evils, we must revise the popular notions of the purpose of God in man's creation. Those notions often assume that the goodness of God is facile good-nature and nothing more. The supreme design of man's creation is to make him happy, and nothing else. To open a new magazine of outflowing joy in the universe is the aim by which Divine good-

ness gratifies and satisfies its creative wisdom. The act is rather an impulse than a purpose. But we engulf ourselves in intractable confusions if we conceive of no more exalted aim than this in an act so sublime as that of giving existence to an intelligent and deathless spirit.

36. In the Divine ideal of him, man is not only a sentient being. He is not an intelligent and immortal being only. He is a moral being. And in a moral being there is an object more worthy of God than happiness. It is character. The grand design of man's creation is the development of grand character. And grand character is by its very nature the product of probationary discipline. The man must grow into it and up to the level of the loftiest possibilities which his nature can carry. This he must do by thinking grand ideas and believing grand principles and lifting his will-power into grand endeavors. He must encounter and master trials which in the Divine decree are grand opportunities. He must "lift himself above himself" into the grandeur of godlikeness by self-conflicts which bring the strain of infinite and eternal verities close home to him.

Such in the nature of things is the law of buoyant ascent into moral sympathy with God. One auxiliary to that ascension is the strain put upon faith by encounter with mysteries of evil and shocks of suffering.

37. A fragment of Biblical story will illustrate

the principle here developed. When the Arabian patriarch lay between the anvil and the hammer of God's discipline, he cried out in a paroxysm of choleric despair, "Am I a crocodile?" Such is the amended reading of the word which our English Bible translates by the word "whale." Whales were not known on the banks of the Nile; crocodiles were. The mind of the suffering patriarch seized upon the monster of the river — the only thing he knew of that seemed to him in keeping with the merciless treatment which he appeared to himself to be receiving at the hand of God. No; he was not a crocodile; he was a *man*. And God was true to the eternal purpose of his creation — to *make* a man *of* him.

38. A spirit of aspiration has been observed as a characteristic of God's wisdom in His moral designs. In that spirit God did not fashion the patriarchal model on a life of ease and affluence and social dignity as its background. "The greatest of all the men of the East" in the Divine ideal of him was not realized by the ownership of "seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she-asses, and three daughters and seven sons, and a very great household." The least in the kingdom of Heaven was greater than all that. Divine methods of discipline were aimed only at best things, — the noblest, the most Godlike, and the fittest for an endless life.

To this end God summoned auxiliaries. A cyclone, a shaft of lightning, a horde of guerillas, a termagant wife, and diabolical ingenuities of torture were His instruments. These He commissioned under that law of which this is the first mention in history, by which calamities come in a crowd. Not otherwise than by such diverse severities of discipline, rushing in fleet-footed succession, could the finished and consolidated character be fashioned which should realize the Divine conception of what an Arabian patriarch of the olden time ought to be.

39. Whatever else this ancient epic was designed to teach, it illustrates incidentally the principle that runs through all the heroic methods of moral government, in which God aims at a revolutionary, often a convulsive, uplifting of a human character by the discipline of suffering. A finished character of lofty type, and specially a character rich in the virile elements which make great men, presupposes conflicts with mystery and throes of anguish. Heroic believers become such by the ministry of heroic pains.

40. To appreciate in its complete emphasis the principle of moral value in things evil, we need furthermore to revise popular notions of the *dignity* of *faith*. Faith — what is it as an element in highly organized character? Many conceive of it as a neutral grace, the dignity of which is proportioned to its inertia. It has only the lunar beauty of a passive virtue.

But its superlative type in finished character can be no such imbecile thing. Rather is it an athletic virtue. It is panoplied with elemental principles of truth. It is rooted in the deep things of God. It has robust, oaken qualities. A man never attains to the jubilant working of a believing spirit until a certain element of heroism is wrought into the springs of his being. This must be the fruit of heroic, disciplinary training.

41. By any and every means an immortal spirit must be set to thinking. It must think responsibility with profound and eager moral consciousness. A great faith must feed on great mysteries. The sinews of its strength must grow tense and wiry by the strain of great conflicts. Many need the discipline of great searchings after God in which they do not find Him. Some must agonize in prayers which in the seeming are dead failures. Not otherwise can some natures grow into that massive and consolidated virtue and that masterful solution of religious problems which shall fit them for their predestined place as powers of control in God's plan.

42. Just here it is that the appalling catastrophes in which Divine non-intervention appears to leave men so frigidly to themselves, develop singularly benignant uses. Welcomed by a docile spirit, and used by an alert one, they brace up the tone of a believing soul. They inject a firmer tension into holy will-power. They plant courage at the roots of fears. In all things that go to

develop in a man God's image, they work in the wake of God's beginnings. In all minds which are thoughtful enough to grapple with such mysteries, they tend to develop the force and grandeur of a great liberty.

II.

FRAGMENTARY STUDIES IN THEOLOGY. II.

1. Reasonings like those contained in the preceding pages need to be enforced by the fact that we are set upon an intense strain of life here, anticipatory of a more intense sequel in an endless future. This allotment is not restricted to men of regal endowments who are created for great destinies. It is the common law of common life. Said an illiterate Catholic woman, speaking of a bereavement which had set her mind to thinking into the underground of her dim creed, "Such things make us see what we are here for."

That one hint from the Holy Spirit thrust underneath the forms of her Church touched the whole secret of the endless life. Science and philosophy in their most far-reaching adventures into the mysteries of providence make no more profound discovery. We are here, not only "to *be*, but to *become*." Everything made or done here is organized for migration. It is like the anatomical structure of birds of passage. Everything has wings.

2. We discover also a moral significance in that feature of *suddenness*, by which many dark phe-

nomena in nature and in providence shock men into affrighted silence. Abruptness is an awful factor in probationary training. Men hear invisible monitors saying, "Be still and know that I am God." It is the only monition they can hear or heed. How fearfully is this illustrated in the annals of certain families! Some homes are shadowed by tragic histories. Without herald, cold, cadaverous fingers have written on their walls.

3. In our modern civilization there is an unwritten discipline by the telegram. Do not afflicted men and women often forebode evil at the sight of one? Do not some who have been elected to a tragic experience, often say in the night-watches, "After this, *anything* may happen; nothing can be reserved in God's silence which is so shocking or so improbable as to take us by surprise"?

4. Family history sometimes undergoes a revolutionary change, like that which occurs in crises of a nation's life, in the displacement of civil law by martial law. After a long period of serene prosperity there comes suddenly an interval of rigor and desolation. The angel of the scourge alights at the door. Affliction follows hard upon affliction. The prattle of children is hushed at noonday. The beauty of young maidenhood is laid low. For years the habiliments of mourning are not laid aside. Yet sudden calamities, even a fleet-footed succession of them, may give to a

human life its most central depth of meaning, as preliminary to an endless career of moral enterprise in other worlds.

5. One of the perils against which an undisciplined being whose destiny looks out upon unknown cycles, may need a protective discipline, is that of *surprisal* into apostasy from God. In this world sin often springs upon unconsolidated virtue from ambuscades of evil. Men are overborne by the spur of the moment. Who can tell what multiplied encounters of that kind may lie in the endless pathway of one whose loyalty is not compacted by a solidifying and protective discipline here? There as here God works by means. He begins far back in the infancy of being. Then as now the perseverance of the saints may be vitalized by moral forces accumulated in this life. That may be the thing which many of us "are here for."

6. Is it not obvious that future crises of moral peril will be met and mastered with most secure and concentrated virtue, by those who have been schooled into moral repose by events which have given a shock to their whole moral being? Said an English colonel in India, "In the first charge of my cavalry in battle, I always tremble into courage and self-collection." So, a godly character, in some of those immortal types which men need to carry into Eternity, grows to its destiny *there* by means of such disciplinary shocks to moral inertia *here*. Their suddenness is the chief element

in the discipline. Courage to give grows under the blows it takes.

What other probationary devices, then, can give to character this reduplication of conscious strength more effectively than those which inject into life the *catastrophic* element of its training? This is a thing of which no man can know anything worth knowing but his own experience. It cannot make a transit from one man's life to another. Character can carry no trace of it into Eternity but that which the man himself has lived through.

7. Real life discloses another fact from which reappears from another phase of rigor and necessity the moral value of the phenomena now under consideration, as probationary expedients. It is that some men do not work their way to any overmastering sense of God's existence till they have known what it is to be God-forsaken. In this, as in many other phases of moral growth, a sense of necessity generates a sense of reality. We have what we must have; no more, and no other.

8. There is a supreme faith, which some have inaccurately defined as "the consciousness of God." More correctly stated, it is a conscious union with God, in sympathy with His thoughts and sensibilities and eternal purposes. It is an experience which often works by reactions. In one swing of the pendulum the occult force is generated which starts its opposite. Faith springs by a rebound from unbelief or from despair. It may grow, therefore, out of that moral solitude in which

prayer creates only a sense of orphanage. God appears to have retired beyond the reach of suppliant voices.

9. Probationary schooling by that awful seclusion works directly into line with the necessities of certain minds. Its moral uses are sometimes disclosed in the training of elect spirits for elect services. In some cases it is the training which discovers the election. Men are put upon the track of their life's mission by the strain laid upon them in the discipline preparatory to its achievement. Pre-eminent saints and elect forerunners have often commenced their careers under a crushing sense of personal abandonment by God. They were orphans in a desolate universe before the Fatherhood of God illumined their pathway.

10. The two great departments of theological thought, — those of natural and of revealed religion, — in the general trend of many of their teachings, lie on substantially parallel lines. At certain points of proximity, the one crosses over into the domain of the other. Especially is it true, that the grandest and toughest inquiries of natural theology find their most luminous responses in the disclosures of Revelation.

11. Such is the fact in the case here brought under review. The consciousness of the loss of God is created by some of the most common varieties of affliction. The discipline suggests an opportunity for a solemn and tender fellowship with Christ. This may be the prerogative of all

believing souls who are called to an exceptional intensity of trial. Our crucified Lord endured the discipline in question in an extreme unequalled in any other human sufferer. He could not otherwise compass the culmination of His atoning pains. He could not find it in His heart to say, in the dawning consciousness of the reward set before Him, "It is finished!" till He had first passed through that blackness of darkness in which all that He could say of filial trust in His Father and ours was that climax of all human anguish, "My God! My God! Why hast Thou forsaken Me!"

12. Probably no other problem suggested by the mysteries of evil in the Divine government presses with such cold, leaden weight upon the popular thought as that of the inquiry, "Where, under the law of non-intervention, is the place for prayer?"

EVERYWHERE. The law of non-intervention does not abrogate the law of prayer. The concealments and silences of God do not restrict the range of its operation. Whatever will explain *any* instance of unanswered prayer will explain *every* instance which to human vision appears to occur in consequence of Divine seclusion. Like every other law, that of non-intervention is but one of the expressions of Divine decree. It covers only those probationary experiences which are foreordained by the will of God. Moral solitude is one of His chosen conditions of moral trial. He is no more oblivious of its working than of that of the law of

gravitation by which the sparrow falls. Nor is there any more mystery in its phenomena than in those of the laws which fix the orbits of the stars.

13. To the popular mind the most transparent conception of the relations of prayer to Divine decrees may be founded on the image of the Divine government as a *network* of laws. To human vision laws run parallel with laws. Laws cross and recross the grooves of laws. There is a Law of Light, which regulates its undulations to the frontiers of the stellar universe. So is there a Law of Prayer, by which as grandly and as benignantly and as far away in the stretch of human thought, God adjusts His responses and His silences, His self-disclosures and His concealments. Each and every one is His eternal purpose. The innumerable reticulations of their interplay are but the rhythmical utterances of His will. Not one controverts another. Not one tangles or suspends another, even in appearance, but at His bidding, and for reasons infinite which make it seem good in His sight.

14. There is an illusion in practical astronomy which may serve to illustrate the complication of laws with laws in the administration of the Divine government. To the naked eye the orbits of the stars seem to cross and recross each other at angles and right angles, which bring them into perilous convergence. To an inexpert observer it would appear that contradictory attractions must bring on abrasions and jostlings and collisions. The heav-

ens, as they look on an astronomical map, appear as if they must some day be crowded with the wrecks of dislocated worlds. A cyclone in the sky, in which Orion and Cassiopeia and the Pleiades should be hurled crashing and ablaze into chaotic space, is not an impossible catastrophe. One touch of retributive decree upon the law of gravitation might bring it to pass. Yet the sidereal universe moves in such exactest order, that no sign of minutest friction even has appeared from the beginning until now.

15. The explanation is that the stars are not located on one extended plain as they appear on a celestial map. Some are at such unmeasured distances in the *rear* of others, that immense spaces intervene between them, when to our vision they are less than one inch asunder. There is and can be no foreclosure of orbit upon orbit, and no ejection of planets from their spheres till the heavens shall be rolled together.

16. Every Autumn witnesses a beautiful illustration of this astronomical fiction. To the naked eye the planets Jupiter and Venus appear to be approaching each other. Evening after evening the intervening space is abridged by instalments till it dwindles to a cipher. Yet at the hours of their nearest approximations the actual astronomical distance between them varies from four hundred and thirteen millions to five hundred and forty-seven millions of English miles. Ample space this, it should seem, for morning and even-

ing stars to come and go without perilous intervolution of their orbits or dislocation from their places.

17. This is a sufficiently accurate emblem of the complication, which is not contradiction of laws with laws, and of decrees with decrees, in the administration of the moral world. The look of contradiction is an illusion. It is caused by a foreshortening of perspective by our contracted range of vision. Ultimately it grows out of the contrast of the magnitude of God with the littleness of man.

18. We flee therefore when no man pursueth if we are intimidated by discoveries of science which the wise men tell us leave no room for prayer. Just as unreasonably do we quake at the shocks and heavings of natural forces against the moral decrees of God. It is yet to be proved that a cyclone cannot be forestalled by believing prayer.

19. When the question confronts us, of conflict between spiritual and material powers, both acting by laws which are the very breath of God, we need to be very intelligent in our wisdom or very modest in our assertions. The wise men are neither, when they assure us that they have risen in their might, and have driven prayer beyond the confines of a respectable universe. We ourselves are neither, when we are scared out of the birthright of Christian believers, by mysteries of evil, and shocks of suffering which we do not comprehend.

20. Suggestions of an overruling Mind in human history are found in the ***concealments*** of Nature and of Providence.

The hiding of the American continent till a new world was needed for the further development of the race; the concealment of certain metallic mines till the financial resources of commerce required their discovery; the burying of anthracite and petroleum till other means of artificial heat and light were approaching the point of exhaustion; the silence of the clouds respecting the occult forces of electricity, till near the time when mechanical invention rose to a level with the discovery; England's ignorance of the value of her coal and iron mines, till they became indispensable to her advancement to imperial rank as the bulwark of Protestantism and of civil liberty; the delay of the manufacture of paper from the pulp of vegetable fibre, till the time when the practical value of the art of printing depended upon it, — these are signs of a comprehensive and far-reaching *plan* of history. It antedates and outlives the forecast of any human mind.

21. Wise men have often observed the singular *marriage* of invention to discovery, and of discovery to invention; sometimes the one and sometimes the other being the senior in the order of time — but without which in union, human progress would have suffered a deadlock. Discovery stimulates invention with prophetic forecast. Every great epochal event in history is brought out of

the arsenal of the ages by a law of predestination. It comes when it must come. It is as if "He who made the lock knew where to find the key."

22. To conceive and to execute such a plan of critically significant events and agencies and combinations must have been the work of some other intelligence than that of man. William Pitt, when he heard of the victory of General Wolfe on the "Heights of Abraham," said, "The more a man is versed in the history of nations, the more he sees of the hand of an overruling Providence everywhere." A devout student must observe the same in the discoveries of science and the history of invention. Man has executed them, but some other Mind than that of man has *timed* them.

23. Supernatural agency in human affairs is forcibly suggested by the mysterious supremacy of right over wrong. We often reason as if this were an intrinsic necessity in the nature of things. Where is the evidence of that? Who has ever proved it? In a world which has lapsed into sin, the very contrary is the "nature of things." By the innate law of character, by which it perpetuates itself, and reduplicates its forces, in such a world as this, the wrong should rise and the right go down. Such is the drift of moral gravitation. Character once set on a downward plane has in itself no recuperative force for a return. What it is, it will be, till remedial power controls it from without.

24. Yet, on the grand scale of trial, right is

never defeated, but by a colossal inequality of numbers and resources. In the wrestlings of races, if it has anything like an equal chance, right never goes under. Moderate majorities never crush it. Reverses never put it out of average. It has become one of the axioms of reform, that God works with minorities. In the conflicts for human liberty, and the rise of despised races, right has always triumphed with a minority behind it. When majorities come to its support, they consist largely of reluctant multitudes, who are drawn over to it by the *suction* of events. They come to its defence when it needs no defence. They do not support it — it supports them.

The most philosophical solution of the paradox is the Christian disclosure of a remedial system which brings supernatural powers into secret alliance with men in the execution of the purposes of God. Our mundane atmosphere is thronged by them. But our eyes are holden that we may not see them.

25. The same truth is more signally suggested by what are called "the fortunes of war."

Why is it that of all the great operations of men in masses of physical potency war is the most uncertain? Why do victories occur in defiance of all visible probabilities? Why is it that Providence, so often, is *not* on the side of the strongest battalions? Why do reverses often contradict all calculable chances? Why do panics make cowards of veteran brigades?

The science of war gives no satisfactory solution of such problems. The great Captains of all ages have confessed the insoluble mystery, unless Napoleon, who exalted the "strongest battalions," is an exception. Yet no hero in military history was a more conspicuous illustration of the truth than he. He declared at St. Helena that the most astounding surprise in his career was the failure of the campaign in Russia. At Dresden, on his march to Moscow, when a half-million of soldiers, the majority of them veterans, were at his command, he said that every military forecast of events gave him assurance of success. By the laws of war, which had been the study of his life, it was impossible that he should fail. Why *did* he fail?

26. No other hypothesis explains the class of events to which the contradictions of the "fortunes of war" belong, so philosophically as the biblical theory of the intervention of supra-mundane auxiliaries, who march under orders unheard by us. Our atmosphere is a non-conductor to the sound of their movement.

27. The first thing which shook the confidence of Napoleon in his "strongest battalions," after crossing the Russian frontier, was the devout tone of the intercepted despatches of the enemy, and of the appeals to the Russian soldiery. The recognition of other than human allies was a factor in the problem for which the Napoleonic theory of war had made no provision. The destruction of the hosts of Sennacherib between the evening and

the morning twilight — a hundred and eighty-five thousand strong — was of a piece with countless phenomena in military history, which no other force accounts for but that of the "Angel of the Lord."

28. The triteness of the beauty of the material universe renders us insensible to the symbolic testimony which it gives to the moral perfections of God. The blunt antagonism between right and wrong might have been symbolized by things repulsive and uncanny. The rectoral and retributive goodness of God *is* symbolized by volcanic fires and the tragic severity of the laws of nature. But the holiness of God has a serene beauty which demands more tasteful emblems. It could not have been inscribed on a world destitute of colors. Heavens void of stars could not have expressed it. Benignant virtues require for their emblematic painting things of exceeding loveliness in earth and sky. The wondrous exuberance of God's benignity demands a corresponding profusion, even an apparent waste, of things fascinating to eye and ear.

29. We find that in this mood God has created the heavens and the earth. Tropic flora, cascades, and rippling brooks, sunsets, and the dawn of morning, humming-birds and orioles, and a constellated firmament are the natural concomitants of a world which is the handiwork of One whose name is Love. The fitness of things is specially witnessed in the fact that the most significant symbols of His character are the most common.

We do not have to search for them in the arcana of science. They are not stored in cabinets of natural history. The very clouds over our heads on a summer day can scarcely take on other configurations than those which artists love to paint. The smoke from the chimneys of our winter homes assumes the form of spiral wreaths, the beauty of which poets sing. The winning attributes of God require and receive for their symbolic utterance a magnificent and ornamented globe which the sun gilds and the moon silvers, and the stars greet. One such vision of His glory as that of Jungfrau at sunset, as seen from Interlaken, gives one an emblem of His benevolence, which lives in memory forever.

30. Agnostic educators do not appreciate the loss they inflict on the culture of the young by eliminating from its moral elements the idea of a personal God. As a power developing and uplifting the human intellect, what other conception within the range of human thought is its equal? What other idea puts significance, as this does, into the phenomena of natural science? Without it, moral science does not exist. Nothing else philosophically interprets human history. Nothing else so magnifies and ennobles literature. The great bulk of human libraries, so far as their educating power over the human intellect is concerned, is nullified when the idea of a personal God is expunged. No act of vandalism is so frightfully destructive to the interests of culture as that of

uprooting the natural faith of childhood in the Divine existence. The conflagration of the Alexandria Library was but a spark in the comparison.

31. Our age deifies its material prosperity. We stand in awe, almost up to the level of worship, before the marvels of invention and discovery. Wise men put them in a nut-shell by saying that all that civilization had achieved for the welfare of mankind before the last fifty years, does not equal its triumphs during this half-century. Measured on the scale of material advancement, it may be true. But the real civilizing forces which have made the world what it is to-day are not such things as steam and electricity. We are not civilized by our command over the law of gravitation. Nations are not made great by Atlantic cables and Pacific railroads. The civilizing powers in all history are Ideas, not things. Of these the regnant forces are religious ideas; and of these the one supreme power is the idea of a personal Creator. A soldier in Cromwell's army struck the keynote of everything in history which lives and wears, when he said, "The best courages are but beams of the Almighty."

32. A large literary assembly happened to be convened at a semi-centennial anniversary on the day on which the tidings reached this country that the first Atlantic cable had brought an intelligible message from the eastern to the western shore of the ocean.

Mind had at last traversed three thousand miles

of the under-world of the sea without sail, or steam, or keel to navigate it. At the word, the entire audience sprang to their feet. At first, cheers rent the air. But the sober second thought of the whole assembly was the request that a venerable clergyman who was present should lead them to the throne of grace in prayer. The idea which lies back of every great causal fact or event in the history of civilization is the idea of God. Well is it for human culture that the Theistic instinct of the race is so obstinate in its demand for a personal God. Literature and philosophy are beneath the average of civilized thinking when they blink the idea of personality in their notions of a Supreme Being. In such repudiation of spiritual cognitions wise men take a long stride toward barbarism. The popular mind of any civilized people is wiser than they.

33. To a working theology in the pulpit, certain elements are indispensable. They are freedom from self-contradictions; consonance with the intuitions of the human mind; a comprehensiveness which shall forbid omissions of essential truth; a perspective of doctrine which shall give pre-eminence to Christian ideas as related to those of natural religion or those of the Old Testament; harmony with the Scriptures as a whole, and as the intelligent popular mind reads them; and statement in such forms as shall carry intense convictions corresponding to the necessities of a mind awakened to the exigency of sin.

34. The initial fact in all theology, as it is in all religious thinking which is truthful in its adaptations to human life, is the fact of sin. The consciousness of sin is an intense experience. In the order of time it is probably the first development of conscious moral being. Man first knows himself as a subject of moral government in the intuition of his moral sense that he is a sinner. In the order of nature, that intuition is intensified by time. The process of deliverance from it involves immeasurable cost in suffering and death. Praise for recovery from it is ecstatic. Therefore the forms of faith which shall meet the conditions of the Christian pulpit must carry the most profound and exalted ideas which the human mind can conceive. Such the redemptive ideas are, in their full significance.

35. Theology adjusted to the uses of the pulpit emphasizes a quadrilateral of doctrines which intensify each other, and give character to all the rest which enter into the system of Christian beliefs. These are the depravity of man as the Gospel finds him; his exposure to retributive suffering in a future life; the necessity of his regeneration by influences of the Holy Spirit; and the dependence of pardon as a judicial act of the Divine government, upon the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ. A preacher's personal faith in any one of these will measure his working faith in the rest. The intensity of his faith in them all will measure the force of his ministrations as a whole. In the

popular thinking they need to be held in an equilibrium which shall make each an auxiliary to the others. Essential error can scarcely find a lodgement in the popular theology if this equilibrium is kept intact.

36. Errors, like truths, grow and decay in the religious convictions of a people, in clusters. A single error is never long insulated. Its cognate group is soon developed. That the germ of a system of beliefs *is* an error, sometimes is not proved except by its reproductive affinities with kindred errors. A belief, like a man, is known by the company to which it gravitates. New ideas in theology may be tested by the reception given to them by the enemies of the old. When alleged improvements of an ancient faith are greeted with loud applause by its hereditary opponents, and gratulations on deliverance from bigotry fill the air, those improvements are probably illusive. Prove all things; hold fast that which *is* good.

37. When an ancient faith is caving in, the most sagacious judges of the drift of opinion are often found among those who have long watched the old faith with an evil eye. They know by heart the process of transition from the old to the new. The snapping of ancient ties is familiar to them. The pioneers in a revolution of opinion are apt to be very honestly insensible of the tendencies they have evoked. The ultimate developments surprise and grieve them.

38. This was affectingly illustrated, if report be

true, in the mental history of the Chief of the Unitarian defection from the popular theology of New England. Dr. Channing was a man of transparent mental integrity. His theology was not of speculative origin. Professor Stuart, his chief opponent in the controversy of the times, revered him as a devout believer to whom the faith he held was a life. It was not possible for such a man to wander from the faith of his fathers in a somnambulistic dream. Every step of the way was doubtless trodden in tears. He lived long enough to discover the ultimate extremes to which the revolution he had evoked was rapidly hastening. And if common fame spoke truth, his closing years were clouded by the vision.

39. When a great truth is dislocated from its socket in the popular theology, the danger of its absolute and final overthrow is proportioned to its intrinsic dignity. It is as if one should pry up a boulder on the summit of a mountain and send it bounding to the valley. The velocity of its descent is proportioned to its weight. So of an imperilled doctrine in the faith of a people; the more massive it is, the more potent are the forces which must be set to the work of lifting it from its place. Therefore the more sure is its fall, and the more disastrous is the ruin which its fall evokes.

40. It is remarkable with what unerring aim a false departure in theology, starting anywhere, reaches the central doctrine of the atonement in the sweep of its forces. Error achieves no fatal ruin

till it gets possession of that citadel of the faith. Consequently, begin where it may, its march thither is prompt and swift. The chief object for which men need a faith is to determine the problems which the experience of sin creates, and the atonement of Christ solves. A tangent in theology, to reach its resultant, must pursue that line in its divergence.

41. The principle above stated was emphatically illustrated in the case of Dr. Channing. There is reason to believe that his departure began with the doctrine of endless retribution. His original belief of that doctrine is indicated by a discourse reprinted in 1885. If it were reproduced now in a Calvinistic pulpit, it would shock the sensibilities of our times as his own were shocked by what seemed to him a ferocious discourse upon that truth in his childhood, probably preached by the Rev. Dr. Hopkins.

It is not unnatural that the animus of such a discourse should have concentrated on that doctrine his first secession from the stern faith of his fathers. Yet that did not occur till a short time before the delivery of the celebrated discourse at the ordination of the Rev. Jared Sparks in Baltimore. In that brief period he had learned to conceive of the scene of the atoning sacrifice of Christ as the central scaffold of the universe, without which the wrath of God could not be appeased.

42. This sympathetic decadence of faith in the atonement, when any other one of the great funda-

mental truths of evangelical theology falls, is entirely germane to the laws of theological belief. From such premises it is a foregone conclusion. The irresistible drift of error at the circumference is to advance by the nearest radius to the centre. A mind of such resolute integrity as that of the Unitarian Chief could not long retain its youthful trust in a vicarious sacrifice for sin by the Son of God, when its faith in the endlessness of retributive inflictions for sin had been abandoned. The same underestimate of the evil of sin, and misconception of its nature, was at the root of both surrenders. Such is the welding of doctrine with doctrine in the Christian system of beliefs.

43. The evil of single errors in religious thinking is commonly underrated. Few popular maxims are so mischievous as that which affirms that it is of little moment what a man believes, if he acts his belief honestly in real life. A man is saved, not by his belief, but by his life. But to live an error is to live a falsehood. The Father of lies does nothing worse. It is as true in the construction of a religious creed as in the ethics of private life, that one lie necessitates another. To act one error consistently must ultimately reduce everything in moral beliefs to error. An honest conscience does not essentially better it in the end. Character thrives on nothing but truth. "The true and the good are one thing. Mind has no natural affinities with falsehood. A false idea, honestly held and lived, is to the moral nature

what a cancer is to the human body. It is an absolutely foreign and malignant growth. Pure blood never creates it. Like a cancerous humor, its tentacles strike inward from the surface to the vitals.

44. That was a capital remark made by the Rev. William Jay of Bath: "The doctrine of election is true, but it is not of equal importance with that of the perseverance of the saints. We must distinguish not only between truth and error, but between truth and truth."

45. In one aspect of it, theology is cathedral architecture. It is a structure in which truthfulness depends on perspective and proportion. The most sinister errors are distortions of truth—often only extremes of truth. Some such have grown out of the hyperbole of Christian song. Ancient hymns transmuted into didactic form became prayers for the dead and to the dead. That element of personal character which men call "level headed" is essential to truth in the popular thinking.

46. Therefore, error which is plausible as a preacher delivers it, is often reduced to caricature as the people think it. That which to him is only a moderate foreshortening of perspective becomes in the popular conception a monstrosity. This is illustrated in the probable origin of the worship of saints in the clerical eulogies of the dead in the early centuries of the Church.

47. It may be an open question, therefore, of homiletic policy, whether at a given time an

improvement in the popular thinking is worth its cost in the peril of distortion which it must encounter in the process. Advances in popular beliefs come more naturally by imperceptible and unconscious growth than by a dead lift from inherited beliefs. Growth in character is always growth of thinking power. Belief thrives on faith.

III.

FRAGMENTARY STUDIES IN THEOLOGY. III.

1. The laws of heredity have significant theological relations to the Fall of Adam, which students of those laws lose much by ignoring. In real life, all things which express and forecast human destiny run in grooves of inheritance. Everything that creates history runs in the blood. Ante-natal prepossessions are at the roots of things. Disease is not more obviously or radically affected by physical heredity than moral character and its sequences are by the same principle in moral destiny. Many of the most mysterious phenomena of life are in exact keeping with the fact of a moral catastrophe in the infancy of the race. They are more philosophically explained by the history of Eden than by anything else. How otherwise, for instance, can the universal sinfulness of the race be accounted for?

2. Animal suffering has melancholy complications with the question of Divine benevolence. Dr. Arnold of Rugby said that it was so fearful in its apparent implications that he dared not discuss it. Many animals themselves protest, at the sight of the blood of their species, by a sound which nothing

else evokes from their dumb natures. No hypothesis explains the phenomenon of animal suffering and death but the Biblical history of the lapse of the ruling race of this world from moral rectitude. The law of moral correspondence between matter and mind requires that the abode of a fallen being and the fellow-creatures who serve him shall sympathize with and symbolically represent his moral character. What he is as a moral being must be declared by sympathetic suffering. The whole mundane system must be set in accord morally with its fallen lord by the symbols of pain. The very rocks and mountains must bear traces of buried histories of pain. Fallen man must see himself reflected in the woes of subaltern species, and in the shock which his fall has given to the solid globe itself.

3. Every central doctrine of the Gospel has collateral uses. We could not afford to part with the truth of the Deity of Christ, were it valuable for nothing else than the vividness which it has imparted to our conception of the personality of God. The whole structure of our faith rests upon certain grand demonstrations of personal identity. Man, a person — accountable to God, a Person — redeemed by Christ, a Person co-equal with the Father — regenerated by the Holy Spirit, a Person of equal dignity in the Godhead, — these are its corner-stones. The tendency of all the ethnic religions has been to confound and obliterate these representations of personality. The tendency of

Biblical thought is to exalt and intensify them. The prime illustration of this in its impression on our minds is found in the Deity of Christ.

4. It is impressive to observe the ingenuity with which the human mind has expressed its interest in the atoning sacrifice of Christ. No other single thought, unless it be the thought of death, has taken equal possession of the Christian world. It abounds even in the literature of Christian fable. A mediæval legend represents that at the festival of Easter, all the *lambs* on the globe are thrilled with thanksgiving to the Saviour of mankind for having put an end to their suffering as the type of His. The conception may have been a puerile fancy in its original setting. The mediæval mind had a rare knack in loading with puerilities sacred things and persons. Yet the legend never could have had form except in an age and in countries in which the Christian idea of an atonement had taken supreme rank in the common mind. Men must think it intensely before they will put it into the mind of animals. It marks the climax of devotional inspiration, that men invoke the dumb world to aid them in its expression.

5. Do not the words of our Lord in St. Matthew 18:7 give us a hint of all which it is given us to know of the problem of the Divine permission of sin? "It must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom they come." Two principles are involved here which appear to cover

the awful mystery. One is that, as related to the power of God, there is in the nature of the things concerned some mysterious necessity from which moral evil springs. That is to say, the preventive power of God cannot exclude sin from the best system of the universe administered in the best manner. To the Divine Mind, its existence belongs not to the kingdom of design, but to the kingdom of the inevitable. The other is that the responsibility for moral evil rests upon finite moral being.

These facts interpreted, each as correlative to the other, point to the nature of the best possible moral system as the cloudland in which the mystery of sin lurks. Its prevention in any creation of moral beings which should be worthy of God, and therefore morally right as the object of His creative wisdom, was in the nature of things impossible to Him. Like change in the immutable relations of numbers, it was one of those blank impossibilities to which infinite power sustains no relation. The phenomenon of sin, therefore, argues no more disparagement to the character of God than the phenomenon of pain in an ulcerated tooth. Things inevitable in nature prove no wrong in character.

6. The contingencies involved in moral freedom are appalling to contemplate if not balanced by Divine promise in the form of immutable decree. In one who has been redeemed from the catastrophe of sin this correlation of opposite truths forms the

only ground of moral stability. The wavering debility of conscience, the consequent weakness of virtuous habit, the paralytic tremulousness of will, and the intermittent integrity of intellectual judgments tend to create trepidations and alarms. These, again, threaten apostasy. Such a being, though regenerate, if left to himself at the starting-point to which regeneration introduces him, must live on the defensive till the end. His life is a state of siege in a granite castle. Aggressive enterprise is impracticable without the panoply of a Divine alliance. In a fallen world if in no other, the stability of virtue in the long process of recovery requires the protective force of changeless decrees. Freedom and election form one of those dual weldings of balanced forces by which the redemptive system is adjusted to the exigency of a fallen mind.

7. It would be difficult to number the controlling minds in history who have been predestinarians. Men who have scouted the truth as dogma have been constrained by the stress of events in real life to recognize it as fact in their own persons. So extensive is this faith among the great *executives* who have created history, that it argues some inborn infirmity or some acquired obliquity in the growing of such a mind, if the man does not discover the truth dawning upon his consciousness before he passes the ridge of middle life.

8. The discovery of personal foreordination is not restricted to any one class of those who have been organizing forces in human affairs. Reformers

and founders of sects like Luther and Mahomet, statesmen like Sir Matthew Hale and the Duke de Choiseul, generals like Cromwell and Napoleon, philosophers like Socrates and Spinoza, painters like Fra Angelico, and sculptors like Danneker, heroes of adventure like Havelock and Gordon, — all come upon common ground in this consciousness of having been chosen by a Power above the plane of their own being to a destiny of achievement planned by no wisdom of theirs in its origin, but of which they have been the executives. Men who have believed this with no religious consciousness have, if possible, been more obstinate in the conviction than their Christian peers. The doctrine of Election which is so transparently taught in the Scriptures is as clearly the teaching of grand biographies.

9. This faith in personal predestination is a necessity to the normal working of the very first order of public men. Without it, born leaders and forerunners do not climb to the summit of their faculties. They do not otherwise grow into the inspiration and the conscious ownership of their supreme prerogatives. By no other means do they command that repose in great endeavor which elect men need. In other words, to accomplish their mission on any masterly scale of enterprise, men must find out on an equal scale of discovery that they have a mission. They must have a sense of eternal allotment to it which in its inspiring and propelling force is equivalent to prevision.

10. Seldom does a man perform a work of signal value to the world without the existence of premonitory hints of it in his personal training. The man is made for his work, and the work is preordained for the man. The man and the work come together by irresistible affinities. The whole process is threaded by Divine foreknowledge and decree. The youth and early manhood of one who is elected to the performance of even a single great thing in the advancement of mankind are never devoid of tokens of Divine prescience and anticipatory discipline. The strategic providence of God inserts into the early development of such men hints which symbolize the great history to come. What such a man does is foreshadowed in the training which makes him what he is. The being and the doing are an equation. It is not in the power of any man to lift his life's work above his character. If he seems to do it, it is but a seeming. It is a mirage. Always and everywhere the saying of Goethe holds good, "If you would create something, you must be something."

11. More even than this is true. A man's antenatal history often gives intimation of *some* elect service for which he is to be created. To this law belongs the fact so well known that remarkable men commonly have remarkable mothers. At birth rivulets of vitality come to a junction from fountains unsealed by a Divine hand for a Divine purpose. The best work which a man ever achieves in this world lies in the grain. The hand

which made him lays down the grooves of his usefulness.

12. When God has in His kingdom of reserve a great thing for one of His chosen to achieve, He does not often disclose the fact of the consciousness of the man himself, till the time comes for the execution, or afterwards. The "Paradise Lost" was a rare exception. The best work of this world is, as a rule, done by unconscious instruments. To them and to lookers-on, the fact that they are elect instruments is an afterthought. The most frequent sayings of wisest men are unconsciously said. Immortal proverbs which tell the wisdom of the ages are fortunate hits. We seldom know their origin.

13. Poetry is the most profound theology. The Psalms of the Old Testament disclose a more penetrative insight into the Mind of God than the Epistles of the New Testament. The hymnology of the Church has expressed more of the immeasurable depths of truth than her creeds. Our great historic confessions are religious life in the work of inquiry, of debate, of action. But when we mount to the heights of inspired devotion, or seek God on death-beds, we turn to the treasury of Christian song.

14. A test of new departures in theology is found in the inquiry, "What is their bearing upon the practical work of the Church for the world's conversion?" Tried by this test, the recent theological adventures in New England present very

grave problems to Christian thinkers. Those adventures go to the root of Christian missions, as we have known them for nearly a century. In two respects they involve disastrous changes in our well-known theory of missionary enterprise.

15. One of these is a denial of the necessity of a knowledge of Christianity in the present life to the salvation of unevangelized nations in the mass. The conviction of that necessity has taken a profound hold upon the faith of the Church. Upon it the magnificent structure of Christian missions has been erected. We have accepted without abatement the Scriptural teaching that mankind, as the Gospel finds them, are "dead in trespasses and sins." It has been to us a stupendous and appalling fact. We have not theologized about it so profoundly as we have believed it. We have taken it soberly to heart. We have found in it an imperative reinforcement of our Lord's command to preach the Gospel to every creature.

16. We have sent the Gospel therefore to the benighted nations as their forlorn hope. Whatever may be true of the minority of exceptional enlightenment, we have acted in the belief that, without a knowledge of Christ the majority of the heathen go into eternity unsaved. It may be reasonably doubted whether without this conviction a Christian mission to the heathen would ever have existed to this day. We cannot know that it would ever have been commanded. At any rate,

this is the appalling theory on which it *has* been commanded and executed.

17. Recent discussions in theology are threatening to overturn all this. Revolutionary change is in the air. It is claimed that the ancient notions respecting the destiny of the heathen are unworthy of broad and noble conceptions of the character of God. By some it is more than hinted that the ethnic religious, antedating Christianity in their origin, are, in their providential design, preparatory to its coming. They have been its forerunners and pioneers. So far they have been its auxiliaries in their working. Some do not hesitate to affirm that they contain truth enough to constitute a saving power to the nations which have inherited nothing better. Not exceptionally only, but on the general scale, the heathen may be saved without a knowledge of Christ. Not possibly only, which few would deny, but practically they *have* been saved in the ages past. By the grace of God, acting through imperfect beliefs and overruling destructive errors, or by the working of occult and mysterious decrees, the natural drift of error to a retributive destiny has been reversed.

Not that all these vagaries of opinion have come to pass anew from recent theological speculations. But when an intense awakening of missionary ardor, founded on intense convictions of the lost state of mankind, has been rudely rebuked, the door is thrown wide open to the influx of any and every error tending to its extinction. Apostolic

zeal is checked when apostolic beliefs are shaken. Even doubt is sufficient to paralyze the nerve of missionary enterprise. A question of their necessity strikes at the root of the motives which underlie them.

18. The questions here raised are not merely questions of Biblical interpretation. They are also questions of historic fact. They are answerable by the phenomena of real life. The actual condition of the unevangelized nations and races, as the Gospel finds them, may be appealed to for independent evidence.

19. If the un-Christianized peoples, by the conditions of their birth and probationary discipline, or by virtue of some occult decree of God, are already *in the time of redemption*, that fact, it may be assumed, will disclose itself in certain very significant phenomena. Individual character should often speak it. Not exceptionally but with sufficient frequency to prove the presence of regenerating forces widespread and rooted deep. Private virtues should give signs of thrift. Public morals should be healthy in their tone and robust in their grip upon social institutions. Such institutions as those of marriage and the family and the judiciary should give evidences of moral soundness. Popular forms of worship should be such as to make for the interests of spiritual religion. Religion and morality should go hand in hand.

20. In a word, the civilizations existing in heathen lands should indicate that society is

morally on an *ascending* grade. Indeed, religions which are preparative to Christianity should approximate its teachings in their regnant ideas. To a philosophic observer they should appear to be *prophetic* of its coming. They should be anticipatory of its ruling spirit, full of sublime and mysterious hints of its revelations. They should breathe an atmosphere of Messianic promise. The civilizations efflorescing from them should display the moral buoyancy of nascent and crescent, not the stagnation of effete and decadent races.

21. Now the critical inquiry is, are these conditions true of heathen and Mohammedan races, as the Gospel finds them? Do heathen and Mohammedan civilizations, before they are renovated by Christian ideas, give any such tokens that they are the work of nations and races which are rising in the scale of moral dignity? Do the facts of Oriental life prove that *any* uninspired religion, or secret redemptive working of the Holy Spirit is a preparative of Christianity in any such sense that it does or can *imitate* among the masses of mankind the work which Christianity promises to complete in the salvation of individuals and the regeneration of society? For example, are the conditions which seem to have existed in the mental history of Socrates and Plato and Marcus Aurelius reproduced on any large scale among heathen and Mohammedan thinkers? How many such examples of mental and moral *forecast* of a revelation from Heaven does a vigilant missionary

discover in a lifetime? To make these inquiries is to answer them.

22. Our time-tried theory of missions is also imperilled by a denial of the *finality* of a probationary discipline limited to the present life and administered under the light of nature alone. We have sent the Gospel to the heathen, believing that without it they can know the living and true God. We have accepted the teachings of St. Paul, that "eternal power and Godhead" are revealed in the phenomena of the material universe and the intuitions of the human conscience. These sources of religious knowledge constitute the groundwork of a just and benevolent probation. If in the working of it men are not saved, they "are without excuse." Such a probation is a "fair trial." It is sufficient to sustain in eternal justice a system of rewards and punishments. *A knowledge of Christ, therefore, is no man's moral right.* It is a gift of God to the undeserving. It is of grace, and of grace only. The perdition of men who leave this world in ignorance of a Redeemer and unforgiven, is not their misfortune; it is the penalty of their sins. They came into the world subjects of an equitable probation; they leave the world subjects of an equitable condemnation.

23. Christian missions, therefore, are designed to save men not from a grim, implacable decree of God, but from the maturing of their own depravity. Our missionaries go to their rescue, not from their fate, but from their guilt. The emergency from

which we seek their deliverance is a voluntary ruin from which deliverance is impracticable only in one world. We claim that probationary discipline under such conditions meets all the demands of the heathen conscience. It satisfies our profoundest reverence for the honor of God. On this theory of probation has been founded every Christian mission in the world. On this theory the Acts of the Apostles were executed and the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans was written. We reasonably doubt whether, on any other hypothesis, such an enterprise as a mission to unevangelized nations would ever have existed to the end of time. Again, we cannot know that it would ever have been commanded.

24. This claim of the equity and the sufficiency of moral trial under the light of nature is now questioned. By some it is uncompromisingly denied. An improved "ethical instinct" is set up as a test by which that which seems to be the plain declaration of the Scriptures is to be tried and condemned. By the same standard of ethical taste the early propagation of Christianity is brought to trial. The verdict pronounced upon it is that it was the work of a darker age than ours. Apostles saw through a glass darkly. Saints had a less truthful insight than ours into the Mind of God.

We are told that the restriction of any man's probation to one lifetime, and that illumined by the light of nature only, is unworthy of God. It is the outcome of an ascetic theology. It is a relic of a

reign of terror over theological inquiry. An eternal destiny cannot be fairly determined by the issues of a moral trial thus impoverished in its conditions and limited in time. Men have a right to something better. A just God will provide something more luminously expressive of His benevolence. If not in this world, then in another, men must be lifted to the level of a *Christian* probation. Otherwise they are hardly dealt with, and God is dishonored. Such is the belief of some, and the petted hypothesis of others.

25. Some who do not claim this enrichment of probationary conditions on the ground of justice, claim it as the fruit of Divine benevolence. They declare that whatever may be theoretical equity in the allotments of probation, infinite benevolence imposes a law of its own. A natural as distinct from a Christian trial does not meet its demand. A probation worthy of God as He is represented in the "ethical judgments" of our advanced culture, must somehow and somewhere bestow on all men a knowledge of redemption. That conception of God which the work of redemption has created must be permitted to exert retroactive sway over the range of its operation. Every man, therefore, past, living, or to come, must have or have had in his own consciousness a *Christian* chance of heaven.

26. Just here the new theology interpolates an error which carries with it immense and sinister consequences in the argument. Yet it is often so plausibly put that the fallacy passes without detec-

tion. A probation under the light of nature only is subjected to a pessimistic depreciation of its value. Its conditions are grossly underrated. Man's moral freedom is reduced to its minimum, by some to zero. Its sublime and awful prerogatives are ignored. The sovereignty of conscience as God's vice-regent in the soul is overruled by laws of heredity. Inherited beliefs are exalted as supreme factors of destiny which lord it over the omnipotence of the human will. The result is that to the popular mind probation under the light of nature appears well-nigh hopeless. It is a trial the result of which is a foregone conclusion. Its magnificent opportunities are but chances. The chances are determined by loaded dice. The certainty of moral catastrophe lapses into necessity. Man becomes in the end, not what he will, but what he must. His probation in this world is rather detective than restorative. He has been thrust without his consent into the arena of a lost conflict. Mankind in the mass are a foredoomed race. Their moral history may have strategic uses in the plans of God for the benefit of other races in the universe, but none whatever for their own. Practically, therefore, to every man's sense of justice, the Christian chance of heaven ceases to be a favor; it is a right. Grace is no more grace. God cannot refuse it without dishonor.

27. We cannot deny that this interfusion of benevolence with justice in the Divine purposes of redemption is plausible. More, it is fascinating.

It appeals to some of the most seductive sensibilities of our nature. We confess the attractiveness of the novel word which has been coined to express it. When men tell us of the discovery of a *Christocentric* law of salvation, we bow in acknowledgment of the adroitness of the epithet. But if it *be* expressive of an advanced insight into the nature of the Divine government, its bearing on the theory of missions to the heathen is inevitable and revolutionary. If prosecuted at all, they must shift their ground of necessity and of motive. They must be supplemented also by the promise of a future probation for all whom they fail to reach in the present world.

28. This is a convulsive change in the missionary policy of the Church. We should take no such leap in the dark. We do well to test it by a plain, practical appeal to the facts of heathen experience. In other words, we should ask for the verdict of the common sense of the heathen mind. Especially is there one line of unwritten history which we may study with no doubtful success. That is, the testimony of the human conscience and common sense when these emerge from heathen or Mohammedan beliefs into Christian discoveries and convictions. What *is* that testimony?

29. What, for example, do heathen converts to Christianity affirm of the character of their ante-Christian history? Do they, or do they not, hold themselves guilty for their rejection of the true

God? Do they, or do they not, repent of idolatry as a sin? What of their licentious and inhuman rites of pagan worship? Do they acknowledge these to have been outrages upon right reason and good conscience? Do they confess infanticide as a crime? Do they hold themselves justly punishable for these things under the righteous government of God? Does the heathen conscience, when brought to face the facts under the illumination of Christian ideas, act the part of a detective, a remonstrant, and a punitive authority in the heathen soul?

30. What, again, have Mohammedan converts to say of the falsehood, the impurity, and the cruelty which are said to be almost universal in the habits of their race? We are told that, in some parts of the East, the courts of English law can scarcely be conducted, because of the obtuseness of the natives to the sanctity of an oath. Warren Hastings, when impeached for high treason in his administration of the government of India, was acquitted chiefly on the ground that, as Lord Macaulay observes, "the oath of a Hindoo could not be trusted." Elsewhere he says: "What the horns are to the buffalo, what the paw is to the tiger, what the sting is to the bee . . . *deceit* is to the Bengalee. Elaborate tissues of circumstantial falsehood, chicanery, perjury, forgery, are the weapons offensive and defensive of the people of the lower Ganges." Mohammedanism is little better in its standards of morality. Islam has

become the synonym of brutality in the service of religion.

31. Repeat the crucial inquiry: how do converts to Christianity from these races judge of their old religions and moralities? Do they call themselves unlucky or guilty? Do they turn to Christ as sinners or as victims of the laws of heredity? Are their vices "*kismet*" or are they crimes? Do they ask for pardon, or do they claim in justice the "Christian chance"? In a word, does the ante-Christian history of Oriental converts, as it lies in their startled memory, *appear to themselves* to have been a moral trial for the abuse of which they are responsible, and justly exposed to the wrath of God? That *self-judgment*, whatever it may be, is the verdict of the silent and invisible government of God which every man carries with him in the vice-regency of conscience. What *is* the verdict? Again, to ask the question is to answer it.

32. In defence of an exotic theology it is often urged that the novel theory is held in theory only. It will not be obtruded in the pulpit at home. The missionary who has been captured by it will carry it in his pocket. He will not attempt to indoctrinate with it infant churches on heathen ground. He will hold it only in philosophical reserve.

It is to be regretted that this plea has been urged for the novel theology or for any theology. If it means anything, it means that theological beliefs shall be held in secret. But a secret theology sug-

gests by the very epithet an offensive odor. We do not know what corruption it may grow to in the lapse of time. It has a Jesuitical look. The world's experience of such a policy in matters of religion is uncanny. If anything can bear light, it is a religious thought. That does not naturally take to hiding. The very consciousness of concealed beliefs imperils the mental integrity of a godly man. It tempts to a tortuous diplomacy a wily man. Christianity finds no place for the distinction between exoteric and esoteric doctrines.

33. But beyond this, a latent theology is impossible for any great length of time to an earnest man. This is emphatically true of a secret belief on such subjects as those reconstructed by the new theology. They are among the most transcendingly solemn themes of human thought. Men who believe anything respecting them believe intensely. No man given to earnest thinking can keep long in reserve opinions so profoundly related to human destiny. They will out, more surely than murder will. They incessantly struggle to the birth. Bold men will not long submit to keep them under diplomatic cover. Will honest men? Diplomatic preachers will disclose them unconsciously. Through crevices of the most adroit discourse they will find their way. The discussion of cognate themes will let them loose in hints and implications and refractions.

34. A preacher may be ever so reticent about occult beliefs in his sermons, yet his prayers, if he

is an earnest believer, will scatter them broadcast. The more devout the man, the more vividly will his prayers tell the story of his secret faith. Never yet did a latent belief long remain in hiding in the mind of an intensely praying man. That which is really *in* him must *fly* out, as through wide-open windows, on the wings of his devotions. Sooner or later, though whispered in the closet, it will be shouted on the house-top. Some men, in indignant revolt from their self-imposed taciturnity, will break open their padlocked lips, and blurt out all they think and a good deal more than they know.

No, no, this will never do. We betray a shallow knowledge of men when we consecrate as a pastor or a missionary a candidate who believes error, or who does not know what he does believe, founding our action on the hope that he will never tell of it. He cannot help telling of it.

35. There is something phenomenal in the reception which its opponents have given to the Calvinistic type of theology. Not in its extremes and its eccentricities alone, but in its moderate and balanced forms, men have heaped upon it abuse and obloquy. No other modern confession of faith has been debated with such virulent and venomous dissent. It is one of the rarest achievements of theological candor, if its opponent gives a statement of it which its believer can accept as his own. Philosophic thinkers lose their balance in assaulting it. Good men fall from grace in disproving

it. The more "liberal" unbelievers are, the more intolerant is their reasoning and the more vitriolic is their animosity. This is emphatically true of that class of men of letters in whose culture literature takes precedence of religion.

36. One of the pet ideas of Mr. Emerson is "the malignant mythology of Calvinism." Such is his modest caricature of a system of beliefs which has for centuries commanded the faith of a larger proportion of the cultivated mind of Christendom than any rival. It has been the favorite belief of the more thoughtful confessors of Christianity from the beginning. Men of independent inquiry, of well poised minds, and of profound religious nature, have inclined to one or another form of it in larger numbers than those commanded by any other theological structure. The literature of the last three hundred years contains more of elaborate discussions in its defence than is to be found in that of all other compends of Christian doctrine combined. In substance it is the spinal cord of the most illustrious of historic creeds. It is the soul of many of the most precious products of Christian hymnology. Men have argued it and sung it with equal force of conviction. Sanguinary battles have been fought for it, as the most potent ally of civil and religious liberty. Historians of the latest and most brilliant type of civilization laud it as a tributary to all that is most valuable in civilized society. Yet in the face of all this, we are called upon to believe that Calvin-

ism, in any form of it, is a mythology! The old Greek *cultus* is treated by many literary men with more decent respect.

37. The Calvinistic way of thinking in theology has commanded the loyalty of Christian womanhood, in its most refined and cultivated representatives, and these in larger numbers than can be claimed for any other symbol of religious faith now extant. Devout woman has trusted it, loved it, sung it, suffered and died for it, in multitudes incalculable. Yet despite all this, grave and learned and reverend critics would have us believe that it is a "malignant mythology"!

38. There is a theology of the rainbow. As a pledge of the veracity of God in the promise to the patriarch on his egress from the Ark on Ararat, the bolt of lightning which had a little while before reddened the heavens in anger, might have been selected and consecrated instead of the bow of many colors in the clouds. Either must have received its significance in part from the potency of a Divine decree. But what else than the variegated coloring and the protective arch — the symbol of strength and safety to all ages — and the sublime reach from horizon to horizon, as pictured by the rainbow, could have symbolized the moral beauty of an immortal covenant of God with the awestruck and trembling remnant of a depopulated world?

39. Creeds, designed to be denominational standards of faith, must from the nature of the case be compromises. It is not singular if, to believers of

an after-age, they appear inconsistent and illogical. The conflicting parties who framed them were each intent on the statement of their own belief, not caring much for the welding of it to that of dissenters. So long as each found its own there, both and all were content. That is often true of confessions thus framed, which Lord Macaulay affirms of political constitutions — that "some of the most useful political instruments in the world are among the most illogical ever penned." The phenomenon, in religious and civil history alike, is one of the inevitable necessities of compromise among independent thinkers. Such representative documents need to be interpreted in the light of their origin. They signify what they were meant to signify. Rankest heresy in the letter may be strictest orthodoxy in historical intent.

40. Subscription to ancient creeds, or indeed to any creeds which are emphasized by the conditions of their origin, involves a point of law and a point of honor. In law the silence of a creed may limit the responsibility of a subscriber. He may believe anything or nothing on a theme on which the instrument affirms and implies nothing. Not so in the point of honor. The history of a creed may carry declarations more explicit and more authoritative than words. Its originators may have expressed by silence a faith too positive to need utterance in syllables. Their reticence may have been evidence that a truth is self-evident. They saw no need of speech. Must a creed framed for an evangelical

church on Cape Cod contain an article denying the Divine origin of the Mormon Bible?

41. Many who do not hold extreme or extensive religious errors, often give aid and comfort to those who do. Error in some things pays tribute to error in all. An ancient faith consolidated in the popular thinking cannot be shattered at one point without opening breaches for assault at every point. The premises which lead to one false doctrine support cognate doctrines underground. Scarcely a contradiction of revealed theology exists to which a false theory of Biblical inspiration may not logically lead.

42. New departures in theology are always fascinating. Opposition is attended with more or less of obloquy. "Orthodoxy," as the world goes, is commonly a term of reproach. Novelties in religious thinking have the look of emancipation from ancient bondages. It is easy to talk on the side of liberty in anything. It is sure to bring down applause from the galleries.

43. The most inexplicable feature of the Divine plan for the redemption of this world is that its execution seems to involve an appalling *waste* of being. Of all the antediluvian generations, only one group of eight souls was deemed fit to lift the Divine decree, and project it across the awful chasm of the Noachian deluge. All the rest of that unknown population was apparently wasted mind. Our sacred books make the impression that, so far as the redemptive history is concerned,

they were flung aside as unfit material for a work so august and so holy. God repented that He had created them. The deluge bears every sign of a retributive infliction.

44. From the deluge to the call of Abraham the scroll of the centuries is rolled up in silence. The "selection of the fittest" is narrowed down to one stock of mind. The other teeming multitudes of being are left out of the executive line of God's purpose in redemption. From Abraham to Christ thousands of years are given to the moral training of one diminutive and obscure people for the welcome of the Redeemer and His late coming.

Again, the great nations are left out of the succession of redemptive decrees. Their magnificent civilizations are a moral desert. Whatever may have been their mission *laterally* to the plan of redemption, to its direct evolution they pay no tribute. They give birth to neither prophets nor apostles nor Messiahs. The idea of a church is not found in their splendid literatures. Their vocabularies — the supreme creations of human speech — contain no words adequate to express certain thoughts of the Divine Mind in the recovery of mankind. The inventive eloquence of St. Paul at Mars Hill could discover nothing in the masterpieces of Grecian sculpture which *as such* he could make auxiliary to his aims as a Christian preacher. He saw no occasion to do homage to Phidias and Praxiteles as in any sense his own

forerunners. Even the colloquies of Plato have lain undisturbed in the silence of centuries. No apostolic inspiration recovered them from the oblivion of ages. As related to the work of redemption, in the grand history of its evolution, the great nations and races of antiquity lie like driftwood in the troughs of the sea.

45. Theological science can never outlive its obligations to the English Puritans. As a body, at the time of their supremacy in English politics, they contained a larger proportion of learned and godly men than any other of equal numbers in Europe. They made the taste of the age theological. Divinity became a study in which men and women of culture were ambitious to excel. Men lost prestige if they were ignorant of the great schools of theological opinion. At the Bar it was a collateral branch of Law. Judges and chancellors wrote theological monographs. Never before nor since the age of the Puritan ascendency in England has the popular mind, even any considerable fragment of it, been so ponderously weighed with theological ideas.

46. In Cromwell's armies, sergeants debated the doctrine of decrees. A painting is extant in Edinborough, commemorating the exposition of a chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, by a corporal in his tent before the battle of Naseby. The chief reason, probably, of the good order of Cromwell's soldiery, when they were disbanded, was that their minds were laden with great relig-

ious thoughts. They had no taste for the frivolities of this world while their life was absorbed in visions of another. Theologic beliefs conceived amidst the throes of revolution received also an intensity which in the line of Puritan descent they have never lost.

IV.

THE PERSONALITY OF A PREACHER.

1. One element exists in all powerful preaching, to which criticism has given no name. Hearers describe it, but do not define it. They say: "We do not know what it is, but it is something individual and peculiar to the man." Jeffrey, the editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, said thus, on his first hearing of Dr. Chalmers: "I do not know what it is, but there is something altogether remarkable about that man." Singularly, this subtle quality has found expression in other languages in corresponding words. French audiences have so often thus described it that French critics have appropriated their description as a lame attempt at definition. They call it the "je ne sais quoi."

2. Preaching may have every other quality of powerful discourse, and yet fall short of superlative energy, for the want of this indefinable "je ne sais quoi." Without this occult inspiration, a sermon which is thoughtful, logical, ornate, practical, and not perceptibly deficient in spirituality, may achieve no more than to elicit some one of the commonplace criticisms by which hearers express the fact that they are pleased, but not swayed.

They say: "A good sermon that for a fine morning! What is the news?"

3. Men who are profoundly impressed by preaching do not ask for the news, nor comment on the weather. The most significant token of the spiritual power of a sermon in the mood of a retiring audience is — silence. Radical change of character or conduct is rarely produced by the faultless discourse here described, unless the hearer, by the spring of his own receptive and responsive sensibility, puts into it an electric force of his own, which thrills him again by a rebound. Such preaching is heard from cultivated pulpits in times when society prattles of itself and about itself, and does not touch bottom in its convictions about anything. At such times, like people, like priest!

4. Other things being equal, a pastor's success will be proportioned to the incisive tact with which he probes the secret life of his hearers. So far as they become to him what they are to their own live consciences, his voice will have the authority of a live conscience.

Sir James Mackintosh once said of William Wilberforce: "I never knew another man who touched real life at so many points. This is the more remarkable in a man who is supposed to live in the contemplation of a future state." It was this blending of insight with foresight which made Wilberforce in his prime the authoritative conscience of the House of Commons. In questions affecting public morals, he was recognized as a

public censor whose judgment it was not safe to dissent from or to ignore. He represented the ideal of a successful preacher — a man who has such an insight into life here, and such a foresight of the life beyond, that he can use both as allied forces in the ministrations of the pulpit.

5. The Divine blessing upon a pastor's work is bestowed under a law of benign and magnanimous condescension. It elects and consecrates the lines of usefulness intimated by his mental structure. The hand which made him lays down the grooves of his life's work. Often it adjusts circumstances and events to his infirmities. Even sins of which he is not remorsefully conscious do not thwart its benignant decrees. If through innate deficit or acquired disabilities, or even unconquerable distastes, he cannot achieve one thing, he is considerately permitted to achieve another thing.

6. To some men some clerical duties are significantly *unconstitutional.* The faculty for them is wanting. Or it exists in such infirm degree that the effort to master them is wasteful of time and mental force. Such duties are not required of such a man. Other things being equal, a man's best work in life is that which he can *do* best — that is, by the use of the best faculty that is in him.

Divine providence is often condescendingly vigilant in its supervision of a pastor's search for his natural mission. It lifts him to his supreme possibilities of achievement. It inspires him with ideals

which are natural to his individuality. He is assisted to work in his own way. Grapes are not demanded of a fig-tree, nor figs of a juniper. Ante-natal prepossessions are often developed and used ingeniously for his advantage. Ancestral virtues reappear in him at critical junctures of his ministry. Ancestral prayers, venerable for their ages of repose in the Divine silence, are answered in his successes, or in failures which are successes in disguise.

7. In a word, if a man is a docile child of God, the Divine economy takes him as he is, with his reserves of undeveloped faculty, and, by secret impulsions and opportune surroundings, and congenial auxiliaries, makes the most of him and them. An eternal *plan* of benedictions ripens in his history. To a large extent it is not *his* plan. Ample sections of it are made up of disappointments and incompletions and retrogressions.

Emerson has somewhere said: "The way into life often opens backward." A wiser seer has said: "Thou shall hear a word *behind* thee saying, 'This is the way.'" A profoundly consecrated ministry is packed full of these Divine condescensions. God never crowds a man to ascetic self-discipline in a work which he was never made for, and which, in God's system of strategic decrees, his life was never planned for. Conscience is awry in its judgments if, from a remorseful sense of duty, a man crowds *himself* into such a discipline.

8. This law of Divine adjustments often gives to

a disappointed preacher his unexpected reward in the successes of other men. In every age the pulpit has contained some men who have achieved brilliant usefulness by proxy.

This was signally illustrated in the ministry of John Foster, the illustrious thinker, and *not* illustrious preacher, of Bristol. Late in life he lamented that he did not know of *one* man, *one* woman, *one* child, who had been visibly led to a Christian life by the elaborate persuasions of his pulpit. Apparently he was not created for the pulpit. Had his stock of self-knowledge been more abundant, or more discriminate, he would never have entered it. He had neither the temperament, nor the beliefs, nor the ideals, of a suasive preacher. His temperament was atrabilious; his ideal of Christian living was ascetic; his theology was fatalistic; his delivery was statuesque; and his person, not magnetic. His congregation dwindled patiently to a fraction. His ministry was conspicuously an industrious and conscientious failure. He was one of the few sons of clergymen who misjudge and misuse themselves in choosing the profession of their fathers. I am unable to recall another really great and good man who has closed a life of ministerial service with such a disconsolate wail of disappointment.

9. Yet John Foster was by no means God-forsaken. He was well known as one of the most suggestive thinkers of the century. His writings, though not voluminous, are a treasury of germinal ideas, which have been more prolific in their repro-

ductive fertility in other minds than in his own. His power of microscopic thinking was unrivalled. The ministry of nearly two generations have been indebted to him for materials of more stimulant thinking than the majority of them could originate, yet which they have adapted to popular assimilation more deftly than he could. The secluded thinker of Bristol, who could not hold his own congregation, has preached in metropolitan pulpits to charmed audiences through the lips of men of the magnetic order and of suasive faculty. Like Aaron the Levite, they "could speak well"; but it was John Foster who roused and fructified their thinking power.

10. Young preachers, on the threshold of their life's work, when oppressed by a sense of their intellectual insufficiency for it, may take heart, in a merely professional outlook on the future, from the fact that the world receives the early efforts of young men with marvellous leniency. The popular patience with juvenile crudities in the pulpit amazes an old campaigner who has become sublimely oblivious of his own. The pulpit, in this respect, is an anomaly. Young men are the favorites there, as they are not at the bar or in the medical profession. A beardless face offsets an immensity of platitude. If a youthful preacher does not overrate himself, he may safely depend on a certain telescopic vision in his congregation to commit that folly for him. Seldom does it happen that they cease to magnify his stature till it

has ceased to be important to him professionally whether they do so or not. Speaking in mundane phrase, he stands a fairer chance of being appreciated at his full worth than a young attorney or a young physician. They must prove their claim before they can assert it; he must disprove his before he can lose it.

11. No man accomplishes work of superlative excellence in the ministry who does not revere his office as one of unparalleled personal dignity. "Sometime minister of the Gospel" was the unpretending suffix which our clerical fathers used to append to their names in the title-pages of their publications. They knew no nobler insignia of rank. There was a worthy pride in their humility. They were dignitaries of a kingdom to which this world contained no equal. Princes of the blood royal, as a class, were their inferiors. Their self-respect bordered on reverence. The world of to-day smiles at their lofty mien, but the world which knew them best bowed its uncovered head when they walked the streets, and reverently stood up when they came down the pulpit stairs. There was no sham beneath the old band and surplice. This profound consciousness of their life's work as a *calling*, a high calling, a calling of God, a calling which lifted them into sacred alliance with Jesus Christ, was one of the elements of that power of control which made them leaders of great men and builders of sovereign states.

12. One peerage in Great Britain is said to give

to its incumbent the prerogative of standing with covered head in the presence of his sovereign. That earldom is an emblem of a preacher's office. A preacher must believe this, or his life will be spent beneath his calling. As a man he must be *such* a man that he can revere himself for being elected of God to the preaching of Christ.

13. An uplifting of a preacher from a lower to a higher plane of religious life is sure to declare itself in a re-enforcement of spiritual power. The vital force in the preacher becomes a vitalizing force to the hearer. In great awakenings the Holy Spirit makes use of the character of a pastor very much as He does of the character of the psalmist and the prophet and the apostle in the construction of the Scriptures. In both the personality of the man is a factor in the weight, and especially in the *aim*, of his message. The truth that is in him is the word which comes from him. His own experience of it as a living thing gives to it a momentum which carries it straight to the mark. Witness Mr. Chalmers in the rural homes and byways of Kilmany, and Dr. Chalmers in the "closes" of Edinburgh. Robert Hall tell us that, in the early years of his ministry, he "preached Johnson." When he became a new man, he preached Christ. Then the Christian world found him out.

14. When personal holiness in a preacher rises to pre-eminence, it is apt to declare itself in an *expectant* faith. He is apt to look for grand and

speedy advances of Christ's kingdom. In great revivals and reformations it is no uncommon thing for those who have felt in their own souls spiritual premonitions of their coming, and who have welcomed them with unintermittent sympathy, to expect a *rapid* conversion of the world. In some minds this *foreseeing* faith takes the form of an anticipation of the speedy coming of our Lord in person. Read prophecy as we may, we cannot but own how tenacious is the hold of this idea upon the faith of the Church in the periods of her intensest life and her most rapid growth.

15. Often the expectation of the near advent of Christ is not so much an opinion as a development of character. It does not spring from a reckoning of prophetic symbols, and the collocation of events in historic crises, but from an *identity* of the believer's personal aspirations with Divine methods of achievement. Nearness to God awakens profounder sympathy with God. Thence come anticipatory visions of advances which shall be *like* God in the majestic sweep of their movement.

16. It is as if the man were lifted up into supramundane regions of space, where supernatural forces are in free play around him. His faith in the future takes on a recognition of those forces as being in the common way of God's working. To men like-minded they afford a prevision of conquests vast and swift. Changes which have the moral impressiveness of miracles seem to him to be in keeping with Divine procedures. They are

no longer exceptional. They are a revelation of occult decrees. Convulsions of nature are their most significant emblems. That the mountains and the seas should change places, appears, to such an expectant trust, a very natural phenomenon, as symbolizing the advancement of a spiritual kingdom.

17. Early failure in the ministry is not necessarily, not even probably, prophetic of a life's work. In the pulpit, as in the secular professions, there are some *late* men. They develop slowly, and reach their maturity after middle life. The growth of the clerical *tastes* is sometimes like the opening of a dilatory spring.

18. I have observed among students of theology a conspicuous difference between those born of clerical or diaconal stock, and those who had more secular antecedents. In the former, clerical aptitudes often seemed to run in the blood. Ante-natal tendencies brought them early into a restful sympathy with their life's work. In others, these auxiliary aptitudes and sympathies were often the result of prolonged and tough self-discipline. Some young preachers have themselves to *make*, as laboriously as they construct their sermons. One of the most eminent pastors of the Presbyterian Church once lamented at the age of sixty years that he was not yet enfranchised from the bondage of sceptical ideas which had oppressed his youth. Yet some of the most useful preachers in the end belong to this class of late-maturing minds.

They do not know themselves, and the world does not find them out, till they have passed their life's meridian.

19. A prime virtue in the pulpit is mental integrity. The absence of it is a subtle source of moral impotence. It concerns other things than the blunt antipodes represented by a truth and a lie. Argument which does not satisfy a preacher's logical instinct; illustration which does not commend itself to his æsthetic taste; a perspective of doctrine which is not true to the eye of his deepest insight; the use of borrowed materials which offend his sense of literary equity; an emotive intensity which exaggerates his conscious sensibility; an impetuosity of delivery which overworks his thought; gestures and looks put on for scenic effect; an eccentric elocution, which no *human* nature ever fashioned; even a shrug of the shoulder, thought of and planned for beforehand, — these are causes of enervation in sermons which may be otherwise well framed and sound in stock. They sap a preacher's personality and neutralize his magnetism. They are not true, and he knows it. Hearers may know nothing of them theoretically, yet may feel the full brunt of their negative force, practically.

20. Dr. Philip Doddridge was an example of a preacher who owed his power in the pulpit chiefly to the impression which his sermons made of the personal integrity of the man. He had neither graces nor forces of elocution. His voice was

unmelodious. A nervous affection destroyed the significance of such delivery as he had. His discourses were neither elegant nor profound. He often discoursed on a dead level. Not an undulation of genius broke up the wooden mechanism of his style. But these grave defects were so overbalanced by the evidences of uncompromising integrity of intellect and heart, that his preaching "attracted and enchained all classes of hearers, from those who could not read the alphabet, up to the poet Akenside." Men went from his public services saying: "He speaks what is true to his own soul."

21. The influence of the religion of a country upon its public men should be a subject of anxious vigilance to an educated ministry. Only an educated clergy can largely represent that influence. So far as the pulpit expresses it, it is preponderantly a moral rather than an intellectual force. The personality of the clergy is at the root of it. Their intellectual culture should be such as to command the respect of other cultivated men. But their personal character should be such as to command reverence. The ministry should justify the *title* by which, for centuries, the world has honored them as an order in society. Men of culture in the secular professions may not believe that the clergy, as a class, are more *able* men than themselves. But it is possible to convince them that, as a class, the clergy are more *reverend* men. If they are not, the religion which they preach will not long hold

the faith of the educated classes to whom they minister.

22. That quality of impressive discourse which, by importation from the French vocabulary, we call "unction" is not identical with the "je ne sais quoi" to which allusion has been made. It is not necessarily peculiar to the individual. It is rather a spiritual grace than an intellectual gift. It is thought so vivified by emotion as to reproduce emotion. In its finest developments it is a devotional impulse. Old truths impregnated by it take on the force and fire of original thinking by being lifted into the atmosphere of prayer. Hence has arisen in European pulpits the usage of interposing ejaculatory prayers into the delivery of sermons. French and German preachers often do this without awakening in hearers the sense of incongruity.

23. Spiritual unction is often extinguished by a preacher's solicitude for the safety of his reputation. Few things are more fatally suffocative to the breathing life of a sermon than this form of egotism. Reputation itself suffers as fatally as the sermon. The Scotch have a proverb: "Nurse your reputation and lose your reputation," — another form of the Biblical admonition: "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it." An invariable element in the supreme flights of eloquent speech which have thrilled great assemblies and changed the destiny of nations has been that which the French call *abandon.* No other arena invites a speaker to exercise it so powerfully as the pulpit.

The chief objection to a professional dress for the clergy is the hint which it gives that the clergyman has, on the sly, been thinking of his person.

24. A secret requisite to a pastor's success is to know what *he* can do with the best use of his faculty, and where is its constitutional limit. It is a capital gift, to be able to work within that limit contentedly, and without waste of mental force, in straining after that which to him is unconstitutional. It is a habit of mind and body which few men acquire without severe self-discipline and some disheartening failures. Contentment in the place and with the work which a man is made for, belongs to the first class of spiritual graces. Short pastorates are due as much to the mistaken self-judgments and the consequent discontent of pastors as to the fastidious tastes of churches.

25. Ministerial faculty when it is not all a waste is often wasteful. It is extravagantly expended on the results which it achieves. The cost of religious achievement should be counted like that of all other human enterprises. The sensibilities of both preacher and hearer are often taxed inordinately. A physician, who is at the head of his profession as an expert in the treatment of nervous disease, once expressed the opinion that clergymen rarely break down in health from excessive labor. "Intellectual labor," said he, "never kills. It is overtax on the sensibilities that does the mischief. Who ever heard of a Professor of Mathematics dying of overwork? The Differential Calculus

never caused a worse evil than a headache." Resources would be doubled by accumulation, if economically husbanded by self-collection.

26. The Divine estimate of the work of a consecrated man in the pulpit is more lenient than his own. The law of unconscious graces governs God's judgment in this thing. He is a magnanimous Judge. He discovers excellences not visible to their possessor. He is especially considerate of that inevitable conflict between the strain of intellect and the aspiration after spiritual culture which often oppresses and tangles the early struggles of a preacher. He remembers the dust from which His hand has fashioned us.

27. One of the marvels of God's condescension is that He accepts imperfect service so cordially. He has no mental reservations of contempt. He deigns to be pleased with any work that represents the best of a man's aspirations. In His scale of judgment, desire rather than achievement is the measure of success. Angels catch their idea of the Christian pulpit from the mirror of His generous opinions. A grand surprise is in store for pastors whom the world never hears of. They will be gladdened at the last tribunal by the discovery that they are no longer cast down by the remembrance of their mundane service. Their works do follow them, and they are not ashamed.

28. The spiritual experiences of pastors in the act of preaching are often suggestive of supernatural guidance. The phenomenon of spontaneous

generation of thought in extemporaneous discourse is well known. In the pulpit it is often accompanied with such an overpowering consciousness of mental illumination, that the preacher cannot reasonably accept it as due only to the ordinary laws of the oratorical instinct. A more philosophical account of it attributes it to superhuman suggestion.

29. In periods of widespread religious awakening the atmosphere is laden with sympathies and auxiliary tributes. Then the phenomenon above named sometimes becomes conspicuous. An incident in the early ministry of President Finney illustrates this. On one occasion he had brought to the pulpit a thoroughly elaborated sermon. He knew of no reason why he should not deliver it. But for same occult reason he could *not* deliver it. An invisible hand seemed to thrust it away from him. Another discourse on a different text and theme came to his mind unbidden. It was as if a secret voice commanded him, saying: "Not that, but this." At the last moment he yielded to the unseen monitor, and preached as he believed the Lord bade him. To the end of his ministry he believed that on that occasion he preached under supernatural direction.

30. Another biographical incident illustrates the same principle of Divine suggestion, in the experience of a preacher whose predispositions and high culture and conservative temperament forbade the hypothesis of self-delusion. He was a man of thor-

ough intellectual discipline and extreme conservatism. In elocution he was one of the most phlegmatic preachers of his time. Emotional vagaries were alien to his temperament and his training. He preached as if in private colloquy. His mental excitement was rarely such as to require a gesture.

Yet on one occasion this calm man, and almost apathetic preacher, in the midst of a written discourse, paused, grew pale, and, with tremulous voice, said in substance: "I do not know what it means, but I seem to be in the presence of an unseen and holy Power. Is it possible that Christ is here, in this house, and would speak to us? Let us pray!" The sermon, I think, had no other ending. The audience retired in awestricken silence. No spoken discourse could have added to the electric impression.

31. Such experiences as the foregoing are of course possible delusions. A preacher who should often profess to be thus moved in the pulpit could not trust himself or be trusted by his hearers. It is not the *law* of the pulpit that the occult teachings of the Holy Spirit should make themselves thus consciously felt by the preacher. But to assume that they never do so would justify incredulity respecting everything that is idiosyncratic in the mental history of genius. The human mind is made for correspondence with the Mind of God. In the service of the pulpit, it is under the promise of Divine illumination. That such illumination

should occasionally disclose itself in the consciousness of the preacher is in keeping with all that we know of the laws of mind and the teachings of the Scriptures. No other interpretation of well-known phenomena in the history of the pulpit is either philosophical or probable.

32. An educated minister is perilously exposed to conflict between his convictions and his tastes. Frederick Robertson once said of certain agitations in the Church of England: "My tastes are all one way; my convictions are all the other way." Dr. Thomas Arnold said in substance the same thing. The dilemma is one which a cultured clergyman must often encounter between the agreeable and the true. Sometimes clerical sympathy with revivals of religion is balked by antipathy of taste to the excitement and methods of revivals. Culture in the pulpit as elsewhere leans to conservative quiet. It dreads the discomfort of radical upheavals.

33. One source of spiritual effeminacy in the pulpit is often found in a preacher's consciousness of secret antagonism to the divinely ordained drift of the age in which he lives. The pulpit is a place of torment to a mediæval mind in a modern civilization. A preacher carrying the load of such a contradiction in the very elements of his personality, is like an ancient "man at arms" on the field of Gettysburg. If any work on earth demands *integrity* of soul, — that is, wholeness of mental and moral being, — it is that of a Christian preacher.

Of him above all other men it is true, that a house divided against itself cannot stand.

34. Pastors encounter extreme difficulty in the cultivation of the meditative graces in a life of distracting toils. Those graces are a necessity to the best successes, yet professional toil appears to be prohibitory to their growth. There is but one remedy: to adopt as one's ideal of Christian living, a *state* of communion with God. Toils and graces interlock if they are sought in conscious alliance with Christ. Toil becomes repose and graces a spontaneous growth in that grand fellowship of kindred.

35. The absorption of a minister's time and mental force in other avocations than those of his own profession is an immense drawback to clerical usefulness. There is a subtle distinction between a vocation and an avocation. Avocations are often a fatal draught upon the vitality of a vocation. The late Rev. President Nott of Union College did a valuable service doubtless to the economics of his time by the invention of an improved pattern of stoves. The Rev. Dr. Morse of Charlestown did a service more valuable to popular intelligence by the construction of a Geography for use in public schools. But to one looking back from this date, it appears that both these eminent preachers would have performed a superior life's work, if they had left such forms of service to their secular contemporaries, and had concentrated their own exertions upon their spiritual vocation.

36. A man called of God to the preaching of the Gospel is rarely called to anything else. When our Lord summoned two of his disciples from their fishing-boats, they left their nets straightway and followed Him. They moved with eager promptness. This was a symbol of the exclusiveness of a preacher's work. Nothing outside of it can augment its dignity. Any expansion of its bulk by secular labors is a contraction of its weight. Relatively such labor is mental waste.

37. It has been remarked elsewhere that clerical influence with the cultivated classes of society is largely reflexive. It rolls back over the heights of social culture by the force of its accumulations below. This is especially true of that class of cultivated minds whose culture is the product of wealth and of the leisure which wealth creates. This is a distinct class in our times, in their relation to the influence of the pulpit. Mental quietude, often degenerating into mental indolence, shields them from direct religious appeals. They are more effectually reached by indirection. Often they are profoundly moved in sympathy with religious awakenings among their inferiors. Indeed, seldom does a powerful reformation agitate the social deeps without reaching the social heights. Other things being equal, sheltered and anchored ease is most solidly impenetrable by the expostulations of the pulpit, except when it is thus broken up and dislocated by the heavings of awakened mind below. The power to reach protected classes

by indirection, therefore, is a factor in clerical usefulness of large range in the society of our age.

38. A young preacher may fail to measure appreciatively his own resources by not recognizing the existence in his mind of latent ideas. Much of a man's reading which he believes to have passed out of his memory is not in fact beyond his recall. It will come to him in fragments, when memory is quickened by sympathy with other faculties roused by the intense thinking of composition. The success of extemporaneous discourse is often due to re-collections of forgotten thought produced by the stimulus of a large assembly. A thousand eyes before him will often magnetize the whole being of a man. They will send his memory foraging for material with the speed of telegrams.

39. More than this is true. A well-educated mind holds within its reach ideas which have never shaped themselves in his consciousness. They are thinking germs lying near the surface and ready at the summons of necessity to spring into language. On their first appearance there, they seem to him to be discoveries. Yet somehow he recognizes them as old acquaintances. They are latent ideas, waiting for expression. Their utterance by another mind may be the thing which first lifts them up into the light of his consciousness. Then his wonder is that such old truths should be sound.

Blaise Pascal was at one time forbidden to study Geometry. When the prohibition was removed he found that nearly all the elementary theorems of

the science were familiar to him. He had elaborated them for himself in his own untaught thinking. The same phenomenon is more signally developed in our acquisition of religious truth. We have latent conceptions and fixed beliefs, and a world of tributary thought in the form of intimations, which take a long time in coming to their maturity. But a well-trained mind is accumulating this occult material all the while. Let such a man keep a note-book in which he stores his unused ideas which are worth using, and he will soon discover that they are more in number than he *can* use. He will learn that his intellectual possession and his conscious discovery seldom synchronize.

V.

THE MATERIALS OF SERMONS.

1. Masterly preaching requires the habitual selection of great subjects. Other things being equal, great subjects insure solid thinking. Solid thinking prompts a sensible style, an athletic style, on some themes a magnificent style, and on all themes a natural style. The best class of topics inspire a preacher to put forth the most tonic thinking that is in him. He cannot deliver an insipid discourse upon them unless he has rare talents for pettifogging. Even commonplace subjects will not be developed in commonplace discussions by a preacher who in the general strain of his discourses breathes that atmosphere of electric thinking which is created by the habitual handling of solid themes. As a man *thinks*, so is he, in every sermon that comes from his lips.

2. The pulpit often suffers loss of vital force by a disproportionate amount of preaching on infidelity and its adjunct subjects. This danger besets especially preachers who have lived through a period of sceptical thinking in their own experience. The preaching of the Rev. Albert Barnes of Philadelphia was impaired in its perspective from this

cause. No other class of his hearers than those of sceptical bias were so faithfully instructed by his pulpit, yet no other class were so few in numbers

3. Scepticism obtruded in sermons, though in the way of masterly discussion, creates a cold wave in the atmosphere. Popular unbelief need not concern the ministry very much in the pulpit. We need not preach with tempestuous fidelity either to it or at it or about it. A live pulpit, aglow with positive beliefs, may for the most part safely leave it to take care of itself. Under the adjustments of probation in a Christian age and country, infidelity cannot come to maturity — it can scarcely germinate vigorously without a premonitory refraction of conscience. That is an experience in which men drift away from the House of God. Men cease to be worshippers before they become infidels. An invasion of that form of error, therefore, must be repelled by other means than the ministrations of the pulpit.

4. The ministry of some men is a comparative failure by reason of excessive preaching on comminatory and remonstrant topics. Among the causes of this we find an ascetic theology, pessimistic views of the future, a saturnine temperament, and a disconsolate conscience. The effect of it is to make the Gospel a message of intemperate intimidation. There is a great deal of faithful preaching which is not helpful preaching. Men do not go from the hearing of it with a more enlightened conscience or a more resolute will-

power. One of the most faithful pastors now living has preached his congregation out of doors by his fatalistic theology and his despondent views of this world's future. This is not a Christian life's work. No other system of human thought equals Christianity in buoyancy. From our sacred books the first and the last that we know of it is a song of congratulatory angels. A man wrongs the only redemptive system of beliefs whose preaching weighs it down preponderantly with intimidations and maledictions.

5. Is the philosophy of the atonement expedient material for discussion in the pulpit? Certain facts weigh heavily in the negative. (1) The Scriptures do not discuss it. (2) Any theory of the atonement must from the nature of the case be fragmentary. (3) No one theory has ever commanded the *consensus* of the Church. (4) In religious awakenings such discussions are not craved by inquirers after the way of salvation. (5) The moral power of the doctrine is greater in the form of unfathomed mystery than in that of philosophical solution. Divested of its mystery, it is shorn of its dignity.

6. Popular science in our day lays upon the pulpit the necessity of emphasizing the supernatural in its general average of impression. This is essential to a certain equilibrium in the popular thinking. Science throws supernatural phenomena into disrepute. Not only by atheistic and agnostic negations, but by familiarizing the popular mind

with marvellous results and immeasurable forces, in which no hint of the supernatural projects itself into the thinking of the people. Science often treats the universe as phenomena which need no cause. The true balance of cause and effect must be preserved by the pulpit. This must be achieved mainly by proportion in the choice of themes. The patriarchal idea of a personal creative and directive force in all phenomena should be made vivid. That which Plato conjectured and which pantheism dreams, Christianity uncompromisingly affirms. The pulpit should keep it fresh and operative in the popular theology.

7. The pre-eminence of the supernatural elements in Christian preaching is enforced also by the drift of the popular mind to absurd and malign forms of it if a rational and benevolent faith in it is not fostered. The human mind will have faith in the supernatural in some form. If not in that benign form which Christianity represents, then in wildest vagaries of belief, ending in religions of cruelty and lust. Men everywhere crave converse with invisible powers. Supernatural histories they must have, if in no better form than that of the Arabian Nights. Childhood craves them in fairy stories. When the sterner demands of manhood express themselves, they cling to absurd myths and malign necromancies, if the beneficent narratives of the Gospel are rejected and its miracles expurgated.

8. The ancient belief in witchcraft illustrates

the tendency of mankind to a malignant faith in the unseen. Dr. Sprenger, in his "Life of Mahomet," estimates that nine millions of the human race have suffered death for that delusion. Women chiefly, and even children of tender years, have been its victims. The longing of human nature for converse with supramundane intelligences is too intense to be content with sportive or conjectural faith in them. They put on demoniacal shapes if the Christian revelation is rejected or its authority suspended. All history teaches that the world will have a demonology of some sort. Demons regnant and triumphant will throng the air if the Biblical doctrine of their subjection to the sovereignty of God is ignored. An agnostic apathy on the whole subject does not meet the case as it lies in the history of human beliefs. The human mind cannot rid itself of the matter in that way. It leaves a vacuum which must be filled; if not by the Christian ideas, then by something contrary and infinitely degrading.

9. The spiritualistic delusion illustrates another form of the same craving for the supernatural, perverted through a suspense of faith in the teachings of the Bible. It is claimed that the spiritualistic mythology now boasts the adherence of twelve millions of believers. Many of these are apostate members of Christian churches. Would such an appalling outbreak of anti-Christian faith have been possible in Christianized nations, if the popular craving for the supernatural had been met

by forceful preaching of a rational, well-balanced faith in the historic supernaturalism of the Scriptures? In determining the question how to preach a supernatural religion, we should study well the related question, What will the popular mind have in its place? Something, it must and will have.

10. Ought the existence of God to be a subject of argumentative discussion in the pulpit? The answer is suggested by a glance at the condition of the public mind when trained under a Christian civilization. Atheism never has been, is not, and never can be, a popular dogma. Robespierre said a profound truth in affirming that it was an aristocratic belief. The mass of men are born Theists. This proclivity is enforced by responsive affinities of conscience which give to theistic faith the insight of vision. This cast of mind is almost universal among the common people of Christianized races. A disbelief in God is to the immense majority of such races an absurdity. Theistic belief runs in their blood. It carries the weight of the common sense. Atheistic revolutions appear to them either maniacal or demoniacal. Preaching, therefore, which treats Atheism as a respectable form of error is to such minds supremely dull.

11. It is marvellous what power that preaching which by the dignity of its subjects and the solidity of its discussions, manifests respect for its hearers, has to make them worthy of respect. A respectable pulpit creates for itself a respectable audience. Laing in his "Notes of a Traveller"

observes the wide difference in thinking power on religious topics between the common people of England and those of Scotland. Those of Scotland owe their superiority to the strength of their pulpits. There, as everywhere else, Calvinism in its stoutest emphasis has taken possession of the thinking commonalty. It has either found such material or created it.

12. Sermons which derive their subjects from local and temporary exigencies are often underrated. Elemental truths have usually found their way into human thought through such exigencies. Truths thus ejected into light, it may be through volcanic craters, are the most effective means of meeting the exigencies which discover them. Revelation itself has come to us very largely through the crisis of national and tribal and individual histories.

13. Eloquence, in preaching as in all other forms of it, consists largely in the art of using occasions and events. Other things being equal, he who lives in his own times and has faith in their precedence of better times is the most powerful preacher. He is the soul of the occasion, the prophet of the event. He lives in them, and they in him. The thing he speaks seems to be the only thing he could have spoken. He is the oracle of the hour. Self-surrender to the truth which the times ask for is the pivot on which his discourse turns. Hence the French critics call an orator's mood *abandon*. Some one has said that all our arts

are happy hits. They are born out of a felicitous use of events and occasions, and crises and things and men all found ready to be used to a purpose. So is it with the triumphs of public discourse.

14. Some of Edmund Burke's most original and profound philosophical reflections were scintillations struck out from the collision of his mind, at white heat, with those of his opponents on the hustings. The most forceful and helpful preaching has commonly a similar origin.

This is one element in the superior force of extemporaneous preaching often observed. The preacher's mind, free from the restrictions of manuscript, and pricked by the extemporaneous necessity, — by the *spur* of the moment, as we say, — springs to the exigency. Real life, in this as in other things, creates its own supplies by the outcry of its own demands.

15. The most successful preachers have been those who, in adjusting the materials of the pulpit, have cherished the most appreciative estimate of small and uncultivated audiences. A far-sighted preacher will not grudge his best sermons to his least numerous and least intelligent hearers. He will revere the truth he speaks more than those to whom he speaks it. This reverence for his work is a distinct source of power.

16. The "Astronomical Discourses" of Dr. Chalmers, on which chiefly his fame as a preacher rests, were first prepared for his rural congregation at Kilmany. His hearers commonly numbered less

than a hundred. He had no thought then of delivering those sermons elsewhere. The success of such a preacher was foreordained. He was predestined to be the oracle of unseen thousands. It is a law of that Providence which directs the work of the pulpit, that hearers shall be found for the man who has the power and the aspiration to say to them that which is worth hearing. He shall not seek them; they shall seek him. Such a man the world always finds. He cannot be hidden.

17. Another incident illustrates the reverence for his work and for his hearers which Dr. Chalmers retained to his life's end. When he became Professor of Philosophy at St. Andrews, he gathered and taught in his own dwelling a Bible class of the poor and neglected children of the neighborhood in which he lived. For that little handful of juvenile paupers he prepared himself with pen and paper as conscientiously as for his class of collegians in the University. After his decease manuscripts were found on file in his study, containing memoranda of questions and answers and illustrations used in those gatherings of his Bible class. Behold the lowliness and the greatness of a Christian preacher!

18. Are funeral sermons worth their cost? It is an open question, with ponderous argument in the negative. A biographical discourse is a painting. Was ever a good painting executed of a live man, from that which we so significantly call his "remains"? Artists tell us that a truthful likeness

after death is obtainable only of children. Death creates much of the same difficulty in painting character in words and in painting features which express character in colors. In listening to such a sermon, if it gratifies our feeling of respect or affection for the departed, does it not also offend our sense of truthfulness by an impression of its unreality? Massillon's descriptive powers placed him at the head of the French pulpit as a preacher of obituary sermons. But French critics pronounce that class of his discourses the least valuable of his productions.

19. A pastor may learn wisdom from a review of the texts and themes of his sermons during any preceding ten years of his ministry. Such a review will disclose the proportions of his preaching. If he has a favoritism for one class of topics, it will appear. One pastor in Connecticut discovered thus the fact that he had not in nearly twice ten years preached on the atoning sacrifice of Christ. A recent critic of the pulpit of London affirms that if one should go the round of the metropolitan churches through a single year, one would learn that much more than half of the texts and subjects of discourse are taken from the Old Testament. A single fact like that indicates defect in one or more of the most vital characteristics of Christian preaching. The ablest ministry are liable to unconscious distortions for the want of vigilant reviews of past labors.

20. Who has ever listened to a sermon on the

despotism of an unenlightened conscience? Yet few inflictions of ignorance and infirmity are more disastrous to Christian character.

The Rev. John Newton, the author of some of the most valuable hymns in the English language, was once, as is well known, a slave trader on the coast of Africa. After his conscience was awakened to a discovery of his exceptional depravity, he could, for a time, scarcely be persuaded to converse on other than religious subjects, lest he should incur the guilt of "idle words." From the extreme of moral stupor he vaulted over to the extreme of moral hysteria. From the conviction that nothing was sin his moral sense came to the conviction that everything was sin.

21. Preaching in religious revivals should have a care to exalt in the minds of recent converts the dignity of Christian living. Youthful believers, under the stress of sympathetic excitement, easily fall into bondage to an ascetic conscience. Enthusiasm misguided easily runs into fanaticism. From that a reaction is sure to come. After such extremes the natural and healthy equipoise of moral sense is not easily regained. The sin of "backsliding" is the normal sequence of temporary subjection to an astringent conscience.

22. Young converts, in their first tremulous awakening to the solemnity of life, have sometimes resolved that they would never indulge in a laugh again. One such youthful devotee did not recover from that self-imposed servitude, till the study of

anatomy disclosed to him the fact that man has facial muscles which have no other use which he could discover than to facilitate smiles and laughter. His moral sense received a vast expansion when he once admitted the idea that, in the creation of man, God must have descended to the sense of humor. An infantile piety, and especially that which succeeds repentance of exceptional guilt, needs to be instructed in the dignity of our moral intuitions, and of the faculty which creates them. A good conscience never drivels.

23. Revivals of religion do not always concern directly the conversion of men and the subsequent increase of the Church. Other subjects than those which are commonly the burden of "revival preaching" are often more needful. A resuscitation of a decadent doctrinal faith is sometimes the most urgent necessity of the Church. An increase of its numbers is not then desirable till the needed reform is achieved. The quality of the Church is a more essential factor in her final triumphs than her numbers. At another time a revival of fidelity to the Lord's Day may be the critical want of the period. An awakening to the sacredness of the religion of the family may be the pressing demand of the hour. For the want of it the children of Christian households may be abandoning the faith of their fathers. A reformation in the practice of the mercantile vices may be the extreme need of another period. Numerical growth of the Church may be held in reserve in the Divine

plan awaiting an elevation of the Church in character. The quantity of moral force in the body of believers depends less on numbers than on godliness of spirit. "What?" is a more vital query than "How many?"

24. "Revival preaching" therefore is sometimes a failure because it is an anachronism. Untimely subjects are discussed through negligence of these correlative awakenings for the want of which the cause of Christ is suffering and the future of the Church is imperilled. But is not the conversion of souls always in order? Yes: in order, but not always in time. It may be no more timely than the reaping of a wheat-field in midwinter. In spiritual as in material husbandry there is a succession of seasons. The wisdom of the springtime is the folly of the autumn.

25. The choice of materials for the pulpit should be regulated in part by the principle that the preaching of experiences should preponderate heavily over the preaching of beliefs. Fidelity to the preacher's own mental history should be the forerunner and the model of his fidelity to hearers. We know very little beyond that which we know by heart.

26. The preaching of Wesley and Whitefield is monumental in history for the grandeur of its successes. Yet it was remarkable for the paucity of its ideas. A few central truths of the New Testament were the staple of Wesley's forty thousand sermons. But these were impregnated with

the Christian personality of the man. They were full of what Whitefield called "soul-life." For that element of soul-life, the early Methodist pulpit has had no superior since the apostolic age. Hence came its romantic conquests.

27. Over against the foregoing principle, however, stands another, — that topics above and beyond the personal life of the preacher are a necessity to a symmetrical ministry. They should not be underprized. The fact often attracts attention in religious awakenings, that some men are grandly *used* by the Spirit of God in the pulpit, whose personal "soul-life" is sadly below the level of their exhortations. Revivalists often have a powerful magnetism which is not wholly the magnetism of grace. The principle involved is the same with that which underlies the enrichment of Christian Hymnology by the lyric genius of men who do not profess to have a personal experience of the truths they sing.

28. It is often remarked that one of the most useful resources of Biblical wisdom is the inspired record of the follies and sins of good men. A large portion of the value of the Old Testament to the uses of the pulpit is found in its fidelity to the experience of sin in the lives of penitent believers. The most natural histories of recovered loyalty to God are found there.

On the same principle an uninspired preacher may find revelations of the elemental principles of religious life in his own unwritten experiences of

sin. His conscious failures in the interior life furnish an illuminated record of truth, often more valuable than his self-conquests, because more incisive in their forms. That which a preacher knows of disaster in self-conflict, he knows by heart. He can speak it with assurance of heavenly prompting.

29. A certain manual of devotion, which has found its way into many languages, has been criticised for its austere fidelity to the record of the infirmities of Christians in their habits of prayer. One unlettered but shrewd reader once said of it in substance: "The author of that book must have been at some time a very wicked man. How otherwise could he have known so much of the failures of praying men and women in their secret life?" The judgment probably had a foundation in facts. The writer had drawn from his own remembered history. Such fidelity to oneself, if disclosed with compassion for others of like burdened memory, may give to a preacher some of his most effective sermons. He speaks what he knows by heart.

30. Some ministers preach disproportionately and unseasonably on the decline of spiritual religion. The fact is often affirmed on insufficient evidence. It is a theme of very easy discourse. The subjects of religious philippics are always such. Yet if the fact be true, it is so appalling that it should never be assumed unproved. A decadent church is a fearful spectacle to angels. But the

phenomenon is never true universally. A "remnant" of the faithful always survives. And they are the hearers who will take home to their afflicted consciences the diatribes of the pulpit against backsliders. No other class of subjects needs to be handled with such delicate consideration for the "smoking flax" and the "bruised reeds."

31. The proportion of remonstrant and trenchant sermons should be restricted by their tendency to degenerate into cynical and vituperative discourse. The secret mental history of the origin of many such sermons, if it were known, would disclose the fact that the preacher is laying upon the consciences of other men, an ideal of Christian living to which his own does not even aspire. An awakening of the moral sense in a religious teacher often spends its force in objurgatory discourse to others. A religious diatribe is one of the contortions of a pricked conscience. An honest discovery of his own deficiencies will make a preacher wary in proportioning his remonstrant sermons. We should walk humbly before God in the mission of rebuke.

32. The objections often urged against the discussion of difficult topics and obscure texts are offset in part by one very striking fact in the mental diagnosis of the condition of an audience. It is that hearers who are not intelligent enough to comprehend the most intellectual preaching still receive benefit from it through the trans-

fusion of ideas from the few who do comprehend it.

Mind, like the body, has imperceptible pores through which thought is absorbed from the thinking of its superiors. The stolid two-thirds of an audience breathe the intellectual and moral atmosphere created and heated by the alert one-third. They are specially receptive of the most necessary and intense ideas. An emotive response of the few to the force of such ideas strikes chords of vibrating sympathy in the souls of the many. A profound mental experience of such ideas — that which introduces them into "soul-life" — cannot be concealed by anybody from anybody. It struggles to the birth in silent expression, though it finds no words.

33. Therefore, preaching above the average of existing culture is a less evil than preaching below it. The chief hindrance to the salvation of many is their indolent, intermittent, somnolent interest in the eternal verities. Mental lethargy is a vice. In matters of religion it is an insult and a repulse to the Holy Spirit. It swells the accumulation of guilt. It is part of a preacher's province to rebuke it by discoursing on some things "hard to be understood."

34. Yet it must be conceded that to the popular mind a frequent cause of dulness in the pulpit is an excess of philosophical discussion. We are not wise in assuming that every truth needs to be proved, or accounted for, or elaborately adjusted

to other truths. Truth assumed is often more potent for moral uses than truth adroitly manipulated. Some things cannot be accounted for; they are not proper subjects of philosophical adjustment. Some are not worth accounting for; they do not expand in the process. Some are minimized in dignity by being subjected to philosophical debate.

35. Sir Isaac Newton believed that he could account for the omniscience and omnipresence of God. He regarded them as necessities of the Divine nature made so by the hypothesis that "space is the Divine sensorium." Does that conjecture add anything to our conception of these attributes? Who knows definitely what it signifies? To the average of popular intelligence does it signify anything which can be comprehended from oral address? Grant it, and what follows? It is dangerous to the force of the pulpit, to reason in a style which prompts blunt hearers to say: "Well, what of it?"

36. A Congregational or Presbyterian pastor must make his pulpit a power by the vitality of its subjects and the density of its thinking, or he has no power. He has no auxiliary support from ritual observances. He has less than none from ecclesiastical authority. No other body of public speakers have so little prestige from adventitious sources as the Calvinistic clergy. The theology they preach is pre-eminently a thoughtful theology. It is packed with the themes of thoughtful ser-

mons. It needs such sermons to express its elementary strength. In the very natural course of things we make much of preaching in public worship. That we *must* make worthy of respect by the best thinking power of a community. This the Calvinistic pulpit has done through all its history.

37. The aim of the pulpit should be to provide for the moral necessities as distinct from the intellectual luxuries and even the religious refreshments of hearers. The literature of the pulpit contains a large cabinet of curiosities. Subjects, arguments, illustrations, applications, appeals, are found in it which are not now, if they ever were, relevant to the spiritual exigencies which preaching is designed to meet. Our Lord would sweep them all aside with a word: "What is that to thee?" If a preacher's work does not rouse in men and provide for a sense of *exigency* which nothing but the Gospel *can* provide for, it runs to waste. Such a pulpit may be one of the ornamental institutions of society; but a moral power with men, in the sense of a power of control, it cannot be.

38. No audience has patience with a condescending pulpit, if they detect the condescension. The greater their need of it, the more vigorously do they repel it, and the more promptly do they suspect the imposition. Even children do not like to be addressed in a style of thinking which is on a level with their years. In this, as in other things,

they aspire to be thought to be above their years. Walter Scott, speaking of juvenile literature, says: "It is a fatal blunder to write down to children." Churchly audiences possess in large degree the spirit of youthful aspiration.

39. The pulpit suffers no hardship in the intellectual demands of the age upon it. This is an awakened world. Life creates life. Thought runs to thought. Originality springs to greet originality. Alert readers clamor for quickened authors. Live hearers throng upon live speakers. The pulpit in this respect comes under the common law of all thinking power in this age of thought. The Holy Ghost does not work miracles to give success to dulness.

40. The popular laudations of simplicity in preaching should be accepted with large allowance for a change of time. The story of Tillotson and his servant-maid may pass as containing a half-truth. But from the present generation the archbishop could not obtain a second hearing. Especially should the pulpit take cognizance of, and make much of, the advance which time has brought about in the general intensity of thinking and living. The still, unimpassioned thinking and inornate style of Addison, which we have been trained to admire as a model, will never do for many of the themes of the pulpit now. Indeed, for some of them, the solemn, the comminatory, the overpowering, and the magnificent themes, it never was a good model.

41. A protracted ministry may derive from the congruity of its messages a certain force distinct from that of isolated truths. Belief gains strength from concinnity. So does the utterance of truth gain suasive force from the consent of one truth to another and of all to each. Ramohun Roy, the Hindoo philosopher, said that the most decisive evidence to his mind of the truth of Christianity was the proof of a congruous and compact design in the structure of the Bible. A long-continued ministry has a similar resource of convincing and suasive power. In a long pastorate alliances of truth with truth have time to consolidate themselves. Silent accumulations of force have time to grow and to interlock. The implications of truth in such a ministry may in moral effect equal its assertions. The most profound and enduring of our convictions rest on such implications and alliances and correspondences.

42. The Trinitarian pulpit is often criticised for its neglect of the moral virtues and their opposites in the selection of the subjects of sermons. The criticism has too much foundation. It is one of the disproportions by which the symmetry of our ministrations is impaired, that the duties and the sins of real life are often overgrown by that system of truth which we call the "Plan of Salvation." The title itself is unfortunate. There is a want of personality in it. The discussion of it needs to be intermingled with more frequent and specific preaching on the morals of common life.

It is notorious that the conversational usages of society are infected with a want of reverence for truth. Yet would not a plain, direct sermon on veracity be to many congregations a novelty? It is well known that in the morals of trade, a distinction has grown up between the oath of the Court-room and the oath of the Custom-house. Yet how many pastors in commercial cities often preach on honesty to the civil government? Coleridge once gave a fine hint to the English clergy of his day. Said he, in substance: "If I were a preacher in the city of London, I would not preach on the sin of wreckage. But if I were a preacher in a coast-village where wreckers plied their villanous calling, see if I would preach on anything else."

43. It is a truism — we ought not to need it; but *do* we not need it? — that the province of the pulpit is to take men as they are, and to call them what they are; if wreckers, then be it wreckers. George Fox thought that he had made a great discovery when he found a preacher who "spoke to his condition." Spiritual awakenings always start with that discovery.

44. The preponderance of so-called "spiritual" subjects over so-called "practical" subjects is a very natural error in the preaching of educated pastors. They are men of libraries. They are as they ought to be, — speculative theologians. They enter their professions at the end of ten years of studious seclusion. To many of them, the "prac-

tical" side of life is a sealed volume. Their themes of discourse are very naturally chosen from their themes of silent thought. The evil of the disproportion is more serious than is often supposed. They may preach nothing but purest truth, yet as a whole their ministry may make the impression of falsehood. Their silences are false while their speech is true.

45. I once inquired of an intelligent layman in middle life what impression the preaching to which he had listened had made upon his practical life. He replied in substance: "None at all. I have heard good sermons for twenty-five years. The sum of all that I have got from them is that salvation is not a matter of conduct, but of faith. My principles of practical living I have had to discover for myself. The pulpit has not helped me." The verdict was valuable as that of the common sense, because the man was not a cynical censor of the ministry. His inherited and acquired prepossessions were all favorable to Christian ideas of life. He made a public profession of religion a short time afterwards. The preaching to which he had listened had been rather above than below the average standard of ability and of earnest purpose. But it had been, as a whole, a defence of the Christian theory of doctrine. The Christian theory of life had been, not suppressed, but *de*pressed by the dead weight of speculative beliefs.

46. In adjusting the materials of sermons, it should be remembered that the pulpit is a product

of the New Testament. It had no existence in the patriarchal, the Mosaic, and the prophetic ages. It should live mainly on the soil and in the atmosphere which gave it birth. An antique mind is out of place in its service. A preacher should be a Christian as distinct from a Hebraist in his tastes.

This suggests the chief error in proportion which has impaired the symmetry of the pulpit. It is that of subjecting the New to the Old Testament in its ministrations. But for this distortion, what a magnificent expansion of power would have been imparted to the Puritan pulpit! Grand as it was in its Mosaic intensity, it would have had the majesty of apostolic insight if it had accepted its mission as one of the creations of apostolic inspiration. As the world grows older, the pulpit draws nearer to the closing ages of time. It should be administered in sympathy with the intensity of ultimate ideas, and the rapidity of ultimate progress, and the grandeur of ultimate conquests. A preacher should be a forward-looking and a far-seeing man. He should be more at home with St. Paul than with Moses.

47. The longer a man serves in the pastoral office, the more exalted will be his estimate of the Scriptures as a treasury of materials for sermons. One of the early discoveries of a young preacher is the affluence of our sacred books in the subjects of pulpit discourse. The early dearth of topics soon gives place to a throng, if a man is a *cordial*

student of the Word of God. Not texts only, but examples of character, principles of truth, illustrations from life, lines of argument, models of appeal, the roots of which lie deep in human nature, abound in it beyond all possibility of enumeration. No sacred books of other religions exhibit this overflowing abundance of materials for popular impression. Therefore other religions have not depended largely on suasive discourse for their propagation.

48. The intellectuality of sermons is subject to a principle which regulates all persuasive eloquence in popular address. It is that the speaker should stand upon an intellectual level above that of the hearers. Yet not so far above as to destroy the sense of sympathy and reciprocity between them. Anything in subject or argument or style which creates a sense of distance is fatal. Distance easily grows to alienation.

Daniel Webster said that if an attorney were perched as high up in the air and as far off from the jury as a preacher was in the pulpit of the last generation, he would not gain a case in a lifetime. The architecture of sermons may reproduce the effect of the ancient architecture of pulpits. An eminent scholar has remarked, with the same idea in mind: "I am always anxious when I see a very learned man mounting the pulpit stairs." The ultimate object of preaching is not instruction, but suasion. That requires proximity of preacher to hearer in intellectual affinities.

49. The most intelligent hearers enjoy most heartily the simplest preaching. Those who clamor for stimulant discourse are they who really know least about good preaching when they hear it. The more ignorant hearers are, the more fuss they make respecting the want of intellectual gifts and acquisitions in their pastors. It is the commonplace mind which complains most unreasonably of commonplace preaching. An eminent Southern preacher once remarked that he never seemed so successful in impressing the masters as when he addressed their slaves.

50. The obligations of preacher and hearer respecting the quality of sermons are reciprocal. If the hearer has a right to good preaching, the preacher has an equal right to good hearing. An audience should bring to the service brains, if they assert the right to receive brains. There is an appreciative and appropriating faculty in hearers which is the preacher's right if he has anything to give which deserves appropriation. The faculty is one by which they meet his thought half-way. They welcome it. They take it in with prepossession. Nothing short of *eager* hearing is good hearing. Without it, a discourse may be inspired, and yet pass for humdrum. With it, hearers will find "sermons in stones." The ablest preacher living has a fruitless labor if he must provide an audience with thinking power, or what is often the same thing, with the thinking mood. They deserve the well-known rebuke of Dr. Johnson to

an opponent whom he failed to convince. The fatal defect of hearers who are indifferent to eternal things is that they have no favorable prepossessions, no eager cravings, and therefore no appropriating affinities. A preacher, if he moves them at all, must lift and carry them.

51. Christianity in its periods of decadence is never more void of vital power than when its ministry struggles to sustain its prestige by preaching chiefly those truths which it contains in common with the religion of nature. An advanced system of faith cannot live on those elements which historically are far in its rear. As well might adult thews and sinews thrive on the organs and nutriment of infancy. Pure Theism alone is more potent than with the adjuncts of the forms and symbols of Christianity from which the life has died out. Under such conditions men had better be philosophers than Christians.

52. One of the Siamese twins died before the other. It has been reported that the survivor died of horror at his terrific brotherhood with corruption. In such a fearful conjunction of the living with the dead is natural religion where bound by an abnormal *vinculum* to a defunct faith in Christianity. Both are doomed to a process of dissolution which has already begun. Such was the state of things in the Church of England in the age preceding the advent of Methodism. Such is the condition of the Unitarian faith to-day, because of its forlorn struggle to build a popular religion out

of the religion of nature, but in Christian forms from which the most intense of the Christian ideas have been expurgated.

53. The denial of man's moral freedom inevitably contracts the range of the pulpit in its choice of materials. A large group of central and most vital subjects are involved in human liberty. Without that solvent they cannot long be held subject to practical use in the popular theology. Logical minds will not continue long to preach on topics which force the servitude of the human will to the front. Masterly preachers will not preach under such conditions. They will not sow seed on a marble quarry.

54. At the decease of an eminent preacher of the eighteenth century in the city of New York, an examination of his manuscript sermons revealed the fact that he had seldom preached to unconverted men. To the communicants in the Church he had preached well. On his fidelity to them his fame as a preacher rested. The unregenerate portion of his hearers were virtually without the Gospel. He had not warned them to repent, for he did not believe that they could repent. He had not urged them to accept the Christian offer of salvation, for he did not believe that Christ died for them. What a fearful hiatus existed in respect to the symmetry of that metropolitan ministry!

55. Ages of great indifference to the ministrations of the pulpit have commonly been ages of equal indifference *in* the pulpit to the sacredness

of its mission. Either by intellectual puerility or by moral corruption, and sometimes by both, the pulpit at such periods has invited the contempt it has received. In the time of Charles II. of England, a preacher at the University of Oxford attempted to prove that the law of nations was revealed to Noah in the Ark. He whiled away the time of his seclusion there in adjusting that law to the necessities of the coming world. Another University preacher defended the use of instrumental music in public worship, on the ground that certain notes of an organ were an antidote to the power of Satan over the spinal marrow of the worshipper. Such were the puerilities of the pulpit which it was the mission of the Puritans to displace.

56. The obligations of the pulpit to the Puritans are not less than those of theology. Queen Elizabeth was a Papist in her antipathy to free preaching. She had the instinctive hostility of a despotic monarch to any power which could share with the throne its sway of the popular thinking.

At one period during her reign, all preaching was forbidden throughout the realm. Afterwards she admitted it in driblets. She said that one or two preachers in a diocese were sufficient. In London many churches were closed by the dearth of priests who could preach respectably. In many rural parishes it was difficult to find priests who knew enough to read intelligibly the baptismal

and the burial services. Infants were unbaptized. The dead were "buried with less respect than heathens." "Many there are," says Bishop Sandys, "who hear not a sermon once in seven years." "In Cornwall," Neal says, "there was not one man capable of delivering a sermon." In 1563 the University of Oxford had but three preachers, and they were Puritans.

The Puritans changed all that semi-heathenism. Their first conflict with the Queen was in defence of their liberty to preach when and where they pleased. It was to remedy the dearth of preaching that they instituted their famous "prophesyings."

57. A good general test of the themes of sermons is the degree of their congruity with the average of the popular thinking in times of religious awakening. Make the eternal verities a reality to one mind, and you produce an effect which all preaching is designed to create in the individual. Extend that sense of eternal realities to the general mind, and you have all that is essential to a revival of religion. The "Great Awakening" under President Edwards and his associates was no more than such a response of society to visions of Eternity. Materials of discourse in the pulpit which fit in congruously with such a popular awakening cannot as a general rule be out of place. If in exceptional cases they are untimely, something in the drift of the popular thought is abnormal. A prolonged strain of such preaching has the indubitable sign which all eccentric and

untimely things have of unfitness to the supreme objects of the pulpit. The normal condition of fallen mind is moral stupor. The normal effect of Christian discourse is a state of quickened sensibility to eternal things.

VI.

METHODS AND ADJUNCTS OF THE PULPIT.

1. The Christian pulpit is a power allied with powerful auxiliaries. That is never its normal working in which it quiescently holds its own. It deals with truth so stupendous, in exigencies so perilous, that its failure to rouse and agitate the world is against nature. When the Apostles "turned the world upside down," they were in the exact line of success which their mission contemplated. Less or other than that would have been failure against all reasonable probabilities. Nothing short of apostasy is so ominous of spiritual decay as a state of moral quiescence under the preaching of a live man. To achieve nothing is to achieve everything that the confederated powers of evil can desire. Absence of progress is retrogression. Absence of life is death. Dr. Chalmers sounded the note of warning for all time in saying: "Christianity is naught when it has become only a force of respectability."

2. Subjects which hearers do not understand, they are abundantly able to misunderstand. They can grasp and appropriate recondite errors with which they have secret moral affinities. Moral

affinity is more than the equivalent of intellectual force. Hearers need, therefore, in the pulpit, methods and auxiliaries to pure truth which create an intense way of putting things. Light must often put on the glare of lightning. Logic must be set aflame. Our Lord's way of putting things was eminently pictorial. That which men heard from His lips they saw. The eye reduplicated the ear. His words were the utterance of an intense mind. He never spoke a dull thing.

3. Young preachers need self-discipline in the selection of the books they read in the early years of their ministry. Reading should be such as to stimulate healthy growth. Two things then put their culture in peril. One is the fact that those are the plastic years in the building of character. A preacher in that initial decade of his life's work absorbs the elements of manhood as from an atmosphere, not conscious of its sources. The other is that those are peculiarly independent years in the building of opinions. If a preacher is ever sceptical or tangential in his convictions, he is so then. Those are the years in which chiefly he comes under the sway of the subtle oppugnation which the new generation feels towards the old because it *is* old. He is apt to be jealous for his independence. Consequently, at that period a young preacher is exposed to the tyranny of school in opinion and in taste.

4. A certain preacher is now living who, thirty years ago, became fascinated by the writings of

Frederick Maurice. He read Maurice; he theologized in the grooves of the opinions of Maurice; he preached Maurice. An educated hearer familiar with Maurice could detect the thoughts and style of Maurice in a series of sermons by his disciple through an entire winter. The vocabulary of Maurice was perceptible even in his prayers. To this day, after a score and a half of years, he has not outgrown Maurice. Twists of opinion and a certain indecisive tone in his style remain to bear witness to the tyranny of one mind over the sensitive years of his early growth. Any author who charms a youthful preacher so powerfully should be held at arm's length for a while. The mind should take time to grow around him, not under him.

5. The reading of religious diaries by preachers as a means of spiritual culture needs to be conducted with precaution. Some of them should be read in a defensive mood. Many of them have been written by men of whom it has been said that "they were born with knives in their brains." They had an overgrown taste for self-dissection. Sometimes this produced a barbarous type of vivisection. A robust religious temperament is requisite to write or to read an intense Christian diary with profit. Ecstatic piety disheartens by contrasts. Hypochondriac convictions debilitate by example. Religious experiences which are self-condemnatory and lugubrious are always open to suspicion. The best Biblical examples of piety are

jubilant. A pastor who must bear the burdens of other men should have no needless burdens of his own.

6. One diary, written by a clergyman of the last generation, and devoted chiefly to his own mental history, was revised by his own hand, not long before his decease, with a view to its posthumous publication. That fact alone should have forbidden its publication. The revision must have caused the interpolation of unconscious quackery. As literature the volume belongs to the department of religious fiction.

7. A capital hint for preachers is found in the reminiscences of a friend of Arago respecting his tact in lecturing to a new audience on Astronomy. It was his habit to look around and find the hearer of dullest look, of lowest forehead, of most inanimate attitude, and to lecture to that man as if he were the only auditor. The lecturer framed definitions for *him*, selected illustrations for *him*, drew diagrams for *him*. He was confident that if he was successful in awakening that dullard's interest, he was sure of the rest. Daniel Webster and Rufus Choate used in their own way to practise a similar elective policy in the Court-room. Mr. Choate once said that there was always one man on the jury, to secure whom was to secure all. In ways practicable to the pulpit, preachers may commonly command the majority of an audience, by interesting profoundly the less cultivated or the more indifferent minority. In any case, to indi-

vidualize the aim of a discourse will sharpen its point.

8. Modern civilization gives to the ministry facilities for knowing men superior to any that existed in ancient times. We can know our audiences, what they are, what their temptations, what the popular currents of opinion and of taste, if we exercise reasonable vigilance and the tact of common sense. A daily newspaper lays open real life to our study with a degree of accuracy and comprehensiveness which was not attainable even a century ago. Probably the issue of the New York *Tribune* for six months presents a panorama of metropolitan life to-day which the sum total of Greek literature now extant does not contain of real life in ancient Athens.

9. Our colloquial vocabulary contains a word not often used in dignified discourse, yet a good old English word which has never become obsolete. It expresses a faculty which the ministry greatly need to cultivate in their study of men. It is "gumption." For the acquisition and the tactful use of knowledge of human nature, give us above all other men the man of gumption. That incandescent vision which sees through men with a clearness that burns is needful to give a public teacher command of men. It resembles that quality in our Lord's mental character which led His biographer to say of Him that He knew what was *in* men. There are men whose eye makes the eye of other men drop. The mental eye of one who

would move men by discourse needs such piercing vision that he shall not only know men, but shall make them know that he knows them.

10. In our Lord's instructions to the first corps of preachers, the personal human element predominates heavily over the official and the authoritative. He commissions them as practical working men to a world of working men. They are not to be chiefly expounders of creeds, interpreters of traditions, men of schools and libraries. No sign of superiority to other men is given to them, except the fact of their commission to teach; and that is to be done in suffering and at the cost of life. The title by which He distinguishes them is drawn from their manual occupation. "Fishers of men" represents their exalted yet humble calling. Honorary titles they have none. His summary of doctrine is brief. His directory of practical instructions is much more extended. His commission reads: "Go ye into all the world; say this, do that." He gives them no orders for the government of a council or the compilation of a litany. But He tells them how to cross the threshold of a private house, what to say to its inmates, and how to leave it. Their office is much more emphatically instructive than cathedral. He does not forbid the Church to make them prelates or to call them saints; but not a word does He say to initiate such distinctions.

11. The most noble discourse requires in a preacher a conscious redundance of perception be-

yond expression. No man is competent to speak on a great theme, till his insight discloses a vast deal more than he can say of it. He cannot speak his mind upon it till he finds in his mind more than he *can* speak to his own satisfaction. A masterly discourse is always the overflow and outflow of a full mind. It is ebullient rather than elaborate.

In this respect preaching resembles what artists tell us of the art of painting. Sir Joshua Reynolds said that "a painter cannot produce a great work till he is conscious of a depth and breadth and intensity of truth in his subject which he never can express in colors."

12. Perhaps musical composers illustrate the principle above stated still more forcibly. Handel, in narrating his mental history in composing the "Hallelujah Chorus," says: "I did think I did see all Heaven before me, and the Great God Himself." In the same sense preaching is a fragmentary utterance. If a man can speak all that he knows, he does not know enough to speak. In nothing is the proverb more significantly true than in a sermon, that "a fool utters all his mind."

13. Prayer as an immediate preliminary to preaching has profound disciplinary power. One of the most valuable apothegms of Mr. Emerson is: "No man can pray heartily without learning something." More than this is true. No man can pray heartily without a penetration of mental insight into spiritual things and an expansion of mental force in their expression. Baxter's habit at Kid-

derminster of spending in secret prayer the hour preceding public worship was in keeping with a law of intellectual discipline. Sermons on intractable subjects have often developed themselves to the minds of preachers in the few moments of preparatory prayer. "In that same hour it shall be given you what ye shall say." Probably Coleridge's opinion, that perfect prayer exercises the supreme energy of a finite intellect, is often not extravagant.

14. Preachers suffer a misfortune who have little or no opportunity for communion with God in the open air. The mental exhilaration which poets conceive of in communion with Nature is more profoundly real to a Christian believer in converse with the God of Nature. In the thought of the suppliant a creative Person puts a soul into creative Power. When the mind is in tune for it, it is difficult to listen to the carols of birds before sunrise without spontaneously joining in the song as a religious service. Wilberforce in one of his letters speaks of his indebtedness to the singing birds, in the forests of Yorkshire, for the quickening of his devotional fervor.

15. Probably the majority of pastors makes too little of ejaculatory prayer, as a means of associating intellectual with spiritual culture. The upspringing of a thought to the Mind of God makes a day eventful in one's hidden life. A succession of such aspirations makes a day historic. Dr. Arnold speaks with great earnestness of the

occult power of such prayer in consecrating life. His friends discerned in his colloquial intercourse a remarkable interblending of the two worlds of sense and spirit. He probably owed it in part to his appreciative practice of ejaculatory prayer.

16. One mind united with God in faith has the resources of the universe at its command. "Few," not "many," is the emphatic word in Spiritual devotion. Where "two or three" are, there is spiritual power. Solitude with God often characterizes ministerial service. Then the axiom has redoubled significance: "So much solitude, so much character."

17. Dr. Doddridge was one of the most faithful of preachers to the duty of prayer preparatory to preaching. Dr. Chalmers observes as a marked feature of the prayers of Doddridge, many of which have been published, the "business-like style of his intercourse with God." His whole mind seems to have been absorbed in them. They have the look of a definite means for a definite end. A living American preacher has remarked that "prayer is a business to be conducted in a business-like way." Mental revery is not prayer. Discursive thinking is not prayer. Æsthetic admiration of the works of God is not prayer. Nothing is prayer but the conscious appeal of the soul to God with a conscious purpose to gain an object. Prayer thus conducted, in continuity however brief, subjects the intellect to the same tension which is requisite in earnest discourse to men. A preacher

may naturally pass from one to the other, on one plane of intellectual energy.

18. It is remarked by Isaac Taylor that minds which are most conversant with sublime truths as subjects of devout meditation derive from them resources of power in argument. He observes in illustration that we find lofty doxologies embedded in the Epistles of St. Paul, in the midst of remonstrant and expostulatory passages. The Apostle's mind seems to seek vigor for the one from refreshment by the other. It is one of the countless illustrations of the alliance of devout sensibility with intellectual force.

19. The rapidity with which pastors in active service must construct sermons forbids the majority of them to indulge a fastidious taste. But some are pestered by this infirmity. They never know when to cease correcting and improving a discourse. Beyond a limited criticism, improvement does not improve. An eminent preacher of the last generation preached one sermon ninety times, amending and embellishing it after each delivery. A reputation created by a few highly organized discourses is an infirm one. Its possessor must constantly nurse it to keep it alive. Sermons are like certain jewels which shrink in weight under excessive polish. The first fresh delivery of a discourse is likely to breathe its truest inspiration.

A fine art like painting may tempt some artists like Leonardo da Vinci and Washington Allston to leave the work of their lives unfinished through

inability to satisfy their overgrown ideals. But preaching is not in any such sense a fine art. It is the work of an emergency. When taste overreaches the sense of exigency, a sermon collapses.

20. The effectiveness of sermons is sometimes diluted by excessive quotation, especially quotation of hymns. A certain discourse taken at random from the literature of the recent English pulpit contains eleven scraps of lyric quotation. Few things give to a sermon so much of conventional commonplace as the citation of hymns, unless they are of prime quality, of recent origin, and few. When the hymn commencing "Nearer my God to Thee" was fresh in our Hymnology, the pulpit persecuted it with quotation. By far-fetched connections with subject, it was interpolated by preachers till, beautiful as it was, it was worn out before its time.

21. The usage of Congregational and Presbyterian Assemblies which represses audible responses to the sentiments of a preacher is one of doubtful wisdom. It sacrifices sympathy to dignity. On the preacher its influence is restrictive as well as on the hearer. In supreme efforts of eloquence a speaker craves some token of appreciative hearing. The instinct of appreciative hearing is to volunteer that token. Magnetism in public discourse is like a shuttle; it moves to and fro. One of the chief sources of the proverbial dulness of sermons is not *in* the sermon, but in the absence of its natural adjuncts. One of these is participation by the

hearer in the work of the hour. An audience suffers ennui often for the want of something to do. Admit them by the liberty of responsive utterance to that which is going on. Their interest in it will grow by expression.

Listeners to secular discourse commonly exercise that liberty. If not forbidden, they take it as a thing of course. Secular orators often depend upon its exercise by hearers. Edward Everett used to plan for the responses of his audiences in his own movements on the platform. The "Hear! Hear!" of the English House of Commons has been reduced to a science by the diversity of its signification corresponding to variety of intonations. The freedom of Methodist congregations in responsive hearing has been an invaluable stimulus to Methodist preaching. Real eloquence gives and takes.

22. The large majority of preachers are not men of genius. The most useful of them are not such. The best work in the pulpit, as elsewhere, is performed by men of average abilities. The most effective preaching in the long run is the *sensible* preaching. This is that in which good sense appeals to the common sense. It wears well. Corruscating discourse burns itself out. Of all varieties of preaching, that of the pyrotechnic school is the most impotent.

23. Sensible preachers find an encouragement in the response which the human mind makes to truth pure and simple. This is illustrated in the

circulation of certain books. The history of "The Imitation of Christ" is monumental evidence to the purpose. Four nations claim the honor of its production. Two thousand editions of it have been published in the Latin language alone. One thousand editions have appeared in sixty different translations into the French language. Thirty translations exist in the Italian tongue. And innumerable manuscript editions were extant in European libraries before printing became an established art.

24. Yet from beginning to end the volume does not contain a sentiment, or an illustration, or an epigram, or a paragraph of artistic style which can fascinate a reader by any other attraction than that of spiritual truth appealing to spiritual necessities. It claims no inspired authority. It was never a representative of a political or moral reform as some works of fiction of world-wide fame have been. It is not cast in lyric form to be sung by the people, as the ballads have been which nations love and sing forever.

In a word, it is not popular literature in any acceptation of the phrase. To a man of the world it is a supremely dull book.

25. Yet it lives. Why? Because it is full of truth which must live. The world cannot do without it. Christian faith finds in the book an expression of the profoundest aspirations of our moral nature. It finds that which meets the great exigency of sin. Age after age, therefore, minds

awakened to the reality of sin have demanded this work of one who had made the same discovery and had found the remedy. Christian culture has thriven upon it. It is full of Christ. It tells the story of one to whom Christ had become the most profound reality in the universe. The believing world, therefore, will have it so long as the world stands. Such a literary phenomenon is a prophecy of the coming reign of Christ over all nations to the end of time. Any pulpit which should be as faithful a representative of Christ in a believer's experience of His personal friendship would share in the same success.

26. In popular religious awakenings the most essential requisite to the power of the pulpit is a healthy balancing of opposite truths. A prolonged pressure of any one class of ideas which appeal to but one side of human nature tends either to stagnation or to fanaticism. Extreme begets extreme. The more intense the awakening, the greater is the peril. Our moral sensibilities are never very profoundly moved by great and holy ideas except when they act serenely. And this is the natural resultant of such ideas touching them at many points and qualifying each other. It resembles the attraction of gravitation by which planets hold each other in their orbits. No more sure sign of moral health in the excitements of a revival exists than that equilibrium of great forces, which, by the stillness of their action, suggest the serenity of the Mind of God.

27. The same balancing of great motives is the most effective defence against the eccentric tendency of one-sided religious excitement to run into animal passion. Real life often discloses the fact that the most exalted sensibilities of our nature lie very near to the most debased. Under favoring conditions the transition from the one to the other is very facile. Hence in great religious reformations, the excitation of certain temperaments passes over from spiritual convictions to animal impulses. It vaults over even from spiritual ecstasy to animal passion. The history of the Anabaptists of the sixteenth century was polluted from this cause.

28. Other things being equal, the most infirm pulpit is that which is sustained chiefly by polemic discussions. The most potent truths, the most conclusive arguments in their defence, and the most pungent applications of them to the conduct of life, their opponents rarely discuss. Discreetly they let the strong points of our faith alone. Polemic discourse, therefore, is apt to be beguiled into inferior lines of thought. The surest method of accumulating unimpressive and lukewarm materials for the pulpit is to follow in the wake of the current unbelief of the day.

29. That is a perilous liberty which we take with the Scriptures in which we claim that our own interpretation and infidelity constitute the sole alternative. Before the emancipation of our colored people, this was the argument on both sides of the great debate. Said the advocate of

slavery: "The Bible surely justifies human servitude: if not, it does not deserve our trust in it as the Word of God." The abolitionist responded: "The Scriptures cannot befriend the institution of slavery: if they do, they cannot be a revelation from Heaven." Such is often the spirit of overconfident exegesis. We have no right to put a Divine revelation in power to any such hazards. The Scriptures mean what they *do* mean, not what they must. We come to them as inquirers under pledge of extreme modesty. It is not our province to construct exegetical dilemmas from which they must extricate themselves or go into obsolescence. Our business as interpreters is not to create, but to receive,

30. The pulpit derives great strength from its alliance with secret auxiliaries in the make of the human mind. Not conscience alone, but the natural and acquired allies of conscience are on the side of Christian ideas. The sense of honor, the instinct of truth, the feeling of reverence, the perception of beauty, the social affections, the love of home, the logical faculty, are all tributaries under the lead of conscience to the force of the Christian sermon. Every man carries within him an invisible and silent government, viceroyal in its relation to God, and supreme in its relation to the man. Every utterance of truth from the pulpit appeals to that confederation of moral powers for re-enforcement. Christian birth brings a man into a complicated system of tendencies and usages and

beliefs which give to these secret alliances the authority of a second nature. Hence arises the phenomenon of sudden conversion so often witnessed in seasons of revival. It is because the moral being of the man is already captured in its stronghold and waits only for the moment of overt decision. Hence also comes another very common occurrence in such seasons that men are apparently led to a revolutionary change of character by the force of truth, pure and simple, with no appurtenances of eloquence or of genius on the part of the preacher.

31. The best defence of short sermons is that given by Lamont: "If a sermon is a good one, it need not be long; if it is a bad one, it ought not to be long." But the criticism is rather smart than true. It is not a fact that all good sermons need not be long. On some of the most weighty themes of the pulpit a good sermon cannot be brief. The modern taste in this respect lowers the tone of the pulpit and contracts its range. On some of the most suggestive texts of the Scriptures it would enforce silence. Boyle has an essay on patience in listening to long sermons. But if a live man is in the pulpit, and live hearers in the pew, patience is not necessary to support a sermon of an hour's length on a subject of which a finished discussion demands that length.

32. That is an unwise policy in preaching which may be termed the policy of hyperbole. It crowds upon the sensibilities of the hearer possible events

as if they were probable, or probable events as if they were certain. Sensational preaching abounds with it. Men tacitly repel it as an imposition on their good sense. The possibility of speedy and sudden death, the possibility that the present is a man's last hearing of the Gospel, the possibility that a present rejection of the offer of salvation will grieve away finally and hopelessly the Spirit of God, — are all true, but to press them on the conscience in exhortations to repentance as if they were more than possibilities is false motive. The momentary impression is more than cancelled by the reaction. In real life men act upon such future contingencies by applying the law of chances. And the chances are by a thousand to one adverse to the preacher's intimidation.

33. Any plea of the pulpit, to be effective, must commend itself to the common sense of men. The common sense, silently applying to the policy of hyperbole the law of chances, rejects them without pausing to argue the case. So far as they move men at all, they have the effect of a scare. A scare nullified is an invitation to apathy. A nimble spring of good sense lifts men above its reach. John Foster says of such appeals that they resemble a false alarm of a thunderbolt. "A sensible man looks out to see if it is not the rumbling of a cart."

34. Christianity never stands upon its dignity. One of its first principles is to take men as it finds them. It descends wherever man descends. To

save, it finds. To find, it seeks. To seek, it goes where men are. It does not wait to be sought and found. A Christian pulpit, therefore, must not wait for men to rise to its own level where they can receive its message gracefully, tastefully, in a scholarly way, contemplatively, or even candidly. It will never do to apply to the work of preaching the punctilios of a very sensitive self-respect.

35. The most effective method of proving any truth which is implied in human duty is to *use* it. Assume it, preach it by implication, persuade men to act it by doing the duty. Make it thus prove itself as fact, and time will take care of it as dogma.

36. The rite of confirmation as practised by the Episcopal Church, or some equivalent, would be a valuable addition to the ceremonial of other than prelatical churches. It expresses a truth which all evangelical churches believe and their pulpits teach. It is a natural recognition of the laws of heredity in their Christian working. It declares that by the gracious action of those laws the children of the Church are in the natural course of things brought within her fold. At the fitting time this should be expressed in their character, and should receive the sanction of the Church by her outward symbol. Liable as such a rite is to abuse, the absence of it is a greater evil. Controlled by a spiritual theory of regeneration and of Christian living, it may be a powerful auxiliary to the Christian family as a tributary to the Church.

37. In discourses on the Deity of Christ, it is not wise to philosophize on the mystery of the Divine existence. Where all is said that can be said, it remains mystery still. Assumption on Biblical authority is the wider method of treatment. Treat it as the Mosaic vision of the creation treats the origin of light. God *said:* Let Light be, and Light was. Mystery thus affirmed carries in its sublimity the force of proof. Inexplicable truth demands imperial thinking. Authority has more weight than logic.

38. A valuable auxiliary to the pulpit is found in a vigilant study of Christian families. Allusion has been made elsewhere to the theory of revolutionary conversion, as not natural to the training of Christian youth. Neglect of this principle has often resulted in consigning youth of Christian parentage to a period of religious despair. Not the despair of consciously extreme guilt, but the despair of Christian fatalism has sometimes been the fruit of ill-balanced preaching on the necessity of a change of heart. Despair in any form intensifies guilt. Said one son of believing parents: "I had reached my thirtieth year before the duty of repentance became a practicable reality to me. My youth was spent in fatalistic bondage to the theory of convulsive regeneration."

39. One sign of the active presence of the Holy Spirit in a community is that stale truths from the pulpit put on the fascination of novelty to the hearers. To their electrified sensibilities it seems

as if they were hearing truth for the first time. They are discoverers in a strange world. Awakening from a spiritual coma is equivalent to discovery. Another form which the same phenomenon assumes is that of resentment of imagined insults in sermons. Hearers listen with the conviction that the preacher "means them." Old sermons heard before, on repetition are found to be full of personal allusions to the hearers. The same truth is a song or an outrage, according to the state of moral stupor or moral quickening in which the hearer receives it. More than once hearers of Whitefield's pungent discourses followed him with stones in their pockets to punish his insolence. In one instance the preparation for assault was the preliminary to conversion.

40. Preachers, when moved most profoundly by the Spirit of God, preach under the sway of spiritual joy. They are conscious of a newborn freedom. In clerical diaries of a former generation may be often found an entry recording the labors of the Lord's Day like this: "Had great *liberty* to-day." Preachers thus inspired speak like men freeborn. Their discourse has a ring of gladness.

41. A wise man in entering the pulpit will leave pet theories behind him. In other professions the most inveterate theorizers ignore their favorite speculations when the brunt of practical life is upon them. Men do not consciously carry theories into battle. If they do, they are beaten, as General Braddock was on the march to Fort Du Quesne.

So it should be with the favorite speculations of preachers. The philosophy of the pulpit should be the common sense of common life. It should be spoken, if at all, unconsciously. Masterly preachers speak the things which most obviously ought to be spoken. They say what hearers detect as necessities to their condition. They speak to exigencies. Men *in* exigencies consciously cannot help responding. The want welcomes the supply. Hunger greets the offered food. "The common people heard him gladly."

42. Few men adequately appreciate the value of the reading of the Scriptures as an ally of the sermon. The Rev. Albert Barnes of Philadelphia once delivered a sermon with great effect which was constructed entirely with Biblical selections. They were carefully interwoven so as to make a consistent and continuous structure. He said that it cost him more labor than an ordinary discourse. An English preacher once read as Dr. Johnson did, the entire book of Ruth. Some of his charmed auditors did not recognize its inspired origin. The Rev. Dr. Hawks of New York used to attract intelligent men of other professions, not by his sermons, but by his inimitable *delivery* of the Bible. The Rev. Dr. McAll of England once said in public: "If the Lord had ordained two orders in the ministry, one to preach and the other to read the Scriptures, if I could have had my choice between them, I would have chosen to be a reader of the Word." It was no uncommon occurrence in the

services of Whitefield that hearers were converted by his marvellously realistic rehearsal of the Bible.

43. The usefulness of this adjunct of the sermon is confirmed by the policy to which managers of City Missions have been led by a long experience of the conditions of their work in the employment of Bible-readers. The most remarkable revival of spiritual religion known in the modern history of Sweden was, under the blessing of God, initiated and conducted by "Bible-readers" alone. The cathedrals were emptied, and the people flocked in thousands, some of them walking fifty miles to listen to the Lascari, in barns and storehouses. Such is the testimony of history. It proves that an earnest reader who is not a great preacher may so deliver the words of the Scriptures that their Divine inspiration shall electrify his intonations.

44. Golden seasons occur in the history of every earnest ministry. They are seasons of coincident opportunities. Churches, like nations, have their conjunctions of circumstance and tendency and resource which promise huge advances. The prime quality of sermons then is timeliness. The chief virtue of the ministry then is vigilance. Grand successes then depend on discovering where men are and aiming the message at them as they are. The work calls for Divine intuitions. Results depend on working in an expectant faith. Preachers at such crises of spiritual advancement should resume the old prophetic title of "Watchmen."

45. The administration of the pulpit should

be conducted in part with the aim at *educating* the Church. Its education in the essentials of doctrinal faith, its education in the reasons for Christian beliefs, its education in the symmetry of Christian graces, its education in methods of Christian work, its education in the construction and history of the Bible, represent the aims of an educated ministry. The blending of balanced graces in character is the grand conquest of Christianity over human nature. The passive virtues alone make an effeminate believer; the forceful virtues alone create tough and repellent believers. The Christianity of the future will command not alone men of silk nor men of steel. A church well developed in character and well equipped in resources must grow to its maturity and find out its mission under wise pastoral training. The chief peril of evangelism is its narrowness. By its concentration on one and but one object of the pulpit, it leaves the great bulk of ministerial labors undone.

46. Our Puritan inheritance has led us to underestimate conversions in early life. The crystallizing process in the formation of character *sets* at a much earlier period than is commonly supposed. Probationary discipline usually becomes decisive of results long before the arrival of adult years. The intellect grows more rapidly and accumulation of moral ideas goes on with more prolific force in the first ten years of life than in any other decade. The ideal of the pulpit,

therefore, should include an early engrafting upon the minds of the youth of the Church, of the duty of consecration to Christ. Beza, in constructing his Will, wrote: "Lord, I thank Thee, that, at the age of sixteen years, I was enabled to dedicate myself to Thee." As a rule, the ripest characters in Christian history are those of the early blossom.

VII.

CONSCIENCE AND ITS ALLIES.

1. The moral sense in man is not designed to stand alone in the conduct of life and the building of character. Alone, it may by its imperativeness create an austere character. By its intensity it may create a narrow one. Its action is rather penetrative than expansive. Hence it comes to pass that some of the most conscientious men are not the most amiable men. They fall into bondage to ascetic scruples and tyrannical prohibitions. Their religion at its best has a ponderous monotony. It reminds one of a treadmill. In some men conscience develops a singular incongruity. It runs in veins. Men are often very scrupulous in some things who are very lax in other things. The brigands in the Apennines go to the confessional most obediently before starting on an adventure of robbery and murder. In more civilized life a more frequent phenomenon is that men of keen moral sense expend its force chiefly in censorious judgment and remonstrant appeals addressed to other men. To such men the times are always out of joint, and they are born to set them right. Hence comes the malign element in fanatical reforms.

2. Conscience has certain natural allies whose working is both regulative and intensive. As conditions may require, they tend to consolidate the impulses of conscience, or to literalize its judgments, or to fortify its authority.

3. One of the natural auxiliaries of the moral sense is fidelity to early ideals of duty. For the want of this principle, character at its maturity often suffers in moral thrift and symmetry. The grand ideals dawn upon a man when his days are young. The soul is young then; the spiritual sensibilities are receptive. Morally as well as physically he is at the top of his condition. Lofty aims have a luminous reality which they are apt to lose in after years. Life is a pedestrian tour; over portions of it we plod; we grow tired and hot when the noonday comes. Thought falls into commonplaces. Aspiration flags. We walk with eyes downcast. Then we learn to compromise principles, to doubt inherited faiths, to act in suspense of conscience, to dip the flag of achievement, perhaps to draggle it in the mire.

4. That was a far-reaching admonition of Schiller's: "Reverence the dreams of thy youth." Something better than romance is in that instinct of our nature which throws a golden halo over the young days. The young ideas, the young hopes, the young projects, the young confidences, the young loves, the young reverence for great men, the young enthusiasms over favorite books, — all have a pure and tonic influence in the memory.

A young man gives a costly pledge to Satan when he pawns his youthful reverence for woman. That is a pledge which is never redeemed. Emerson said to the students of Dartmouth College: "When you shall say, 'I renounce — I am sorry for it — my early visions,' then dies the man in you."

5. Swedenborg saw in his thirteen years of dream-life, that time in Heaven rejuvenates men. The oldest there have the most youthful persons. There are no decrepit angels. No blind eyes, no deaf-mutes, no cripples are there. This was the old Greek wisdom fermenting in the Swede's abnormal brain. "The immortals are always young. In like manner the Christian ideal of life perpetuates juvenescence in its lofty aspirations. Christianity has something yet to do for a man, if it has not fortified his moral sensibilities by mastering the tendency to decadence which years create in his thinking and achievement.

6. Conscience finds a capital auxiliary also in an appreciation of the gift of speech, as one which is susceptible of Christian uses. If many are conscientious in word who are not so in act, some are conscientious in action who are not so in speech. A great deal of moral stamina leaks away in driblets of insignificant and irreligious talk. "Idle words" monopolize not a little of the colloquial pleasures of cultivated society. Many have the gift of prayer who have not the gift of reticence. The theory of the origin of language which makes it the direct gift of God is at least *as* probable as

any other. It should be revered as a Divine endowment. It is akin to the moral sense in its dignity and more noble than the sense of beauty. The speech of an idle mind is sin. Even the North American savage has it among his reverend traditions that a deaf-mute is stricken of God.

7. The majority of men impair their moral force by talking too much. A profound insight into one side of human nature was involved in the Pythagorean device of education, which consigned a young man to silence for five years. An immense amount of falsehood is uttered in unconscious gabbling. We reasonably distrust a man's absolute veracity when we discover that he loves to hear himself talk. A portrait of heroic size was suggested of Baron Von Moltke, by the criticism: "He knows how to be silent in seven languages." What wisdom, what strength of intellect, what weight of character, what latent force, what unknown resources, we involuntarily attribute to reticent men! We think that the less they say, the more they *can* say which would be worth hearing. This is our spontaneous tribute to a great virtue.

8. Our admiration of the gift of silence is sometimes misplaced. Coleridge's experience with the silent man and the apple dumplings is well known. A remarkable illustration of the same misjudgment has occurred in American history. For a hundred years, under the lead of Thomas Jefferson, our national conception of the North American Indian

was that of a marvel of dignity and self-control for his power of taciturnity. Jefferson taught us to consider a Mohawk Council-fire a model for Senates. But the Rev. Dr. Palfrey has pricked that bubble. He claims that aboriginal taciturnity was sheer stolidity. In his best condition the Nipmuck chief said nothing because he had nothing to say; and he fell asleep at that. The savage mind was void of ideas. He had therefore the cunning to hold his tongue.

9. Of all men most infirm in the virtues collateral to the moral sense are the buffoons in speech. They are apt to be dwarfs and cripples in enterprise. In an emergency they seldom know what to do till graver men teach them. They are bankrupt in resources when men of resources are most needful. Events outwit them. Such men are out of place in an awakened world. Two classes of men are never buffoons, very great men and very good men. Great thoughts in the one class and great virtues in the other give solidity to character and intensity to thinking-power. Life centred in anything either great or good, men do not fool away.

10. The moral sense is broadened and deepened as an element of character, by reverence for one's *occupation* in life as a part of one's religion. We are often admonished to make a business of our religion. It is quite as essential to right living that a man should make a religion of his business. This means vastly more than that he should not be

a liar and a cheat. It means that he should be unselfish in his business. He should conduct it on principles of benevolence. A Christian purchase or sale implies reciprocity of profit. That fine sense of right and wrong which makes a man seek opportunities for generous giving should make him generous in a trade.

The whole theory of commercial life which makes it a conflict between competitors, in which each must grapple with the other as a foe, is unchristian. Like everything else which is unchristian, it is unmanly. Character suffers an immense degradation from the ascendency of such a principle in that which occupies the larger portion of a man's waking hours and absorbs the best energies of his manhood. Money-making conducted on that principle makes hard men. In no other form does selfishness crystallize into a type of evil so fixed and unimpressible. Character thus indurated in wrong is harder than the metals of which money is made. These can be made fluid by fire; the other by nothing but the breath of God.

11. One who has the means of knowing declares that a growing *atrophy* of benevolent instincts is perceptible in the recent history of civilized commerce. He affirms that there is less of spontaneous giving than there was fifty years ago. There is less of gratuitous service between man and man. Everybody must be paid for everything. Competition is more relentless and pugnacious. The morals of trade have become the morals of war.

Why should it not be so if "competition is the life of business." Says another keen observer: "The ways of trade have become selfish to the borders of theft, and supple to the borders of fraud." Alluding to the oaths of the Custom-house, the same censor of public morals adds: "We eat and drink and wear perjury in a hundred commodities."

12. It is by no means certain that the increase of organized beneficence is a fair substitute for the ancient ways in keeping the elements of character in fine accord and in concerted tribute to a noble life. Indeed, glaring instances occur in which organized giving makes not a whit of difference in the grip of selfish grabbing. It is reported that a merchant of New York, whose name appeared in subscription lists for twenty years, prided himself on the fact that he had not in all that time permitted a youthful tradesman to succeed in that city who had learned his business in the princely merchant's complicated and colossal commerce. He crushed such beginners by underselling them at his own cost. He claimed the right to do it because he had the power — and is not competition the life of commerce? His principle of life was that of England's freebooter, —

> "That they should take who have the power,
> And they should keep who can."

Would even fabulous wealth and the prestige created by amassing it have glossed the reputation of a man fifty years ago who conducted his busi-

ness in that Satanic style? Defaulting cashiers and treasurers ought not to surprise us; they are germane to the soil; they breed in the atmosphere of commercial life, if conducted on the principle of selfish competition.

13. The moral faculty, enlightened by Christian training, is expansive almost without limit in its affinities with the professions and trades by which men earn their livelihood. Labor is a factor in man's destiny by Divine decree. Natural religion adopts it in the name of God. Revealed religion baptizes it in the name of Christ. Both dignify and sanctify it when performed under the supremacy of a good conscience before God and man. Professor Agassiz used to say that, "on the large scale of things a physical fact is as sacred as a moral principle." So the Christian law of conscience takes into its embrace all secular occupations and blesses them. They are all religious if conducted on Christian principles. As it respects the time they consume, and the mental and moral forces they expend, they constitute the chief religion of the majority of good men.

14. In comparison with the religion of secular duties, certain more demonstratively religious habits may be overrated. The moral sense of some men is — we will not say *per*verted, but — *di*verted from their best vocation. Christian work directly for the conversion of men to an actively religious life is not the highest vocation of every man. Not every man is an expert in it. It is

sometimes laid upon the conscience unwisely and with excess of pressure. A keen observer of men has published an essay on the futility of training a man to do that which is not *in* him. We may judiciously apply the principle to self-training. It is not *in* some men to talk usefully on personal religion. They make a burlesque of it in the attempt. They can make shovels or navigate a ship more deftly.

15. It is never wise to fling duty into the face of Nature. Conscience is sure to suffer in the rebound. When the sense of duty is adverse to a man's natural gifts and tastes and training, the presumption is that the moral sense has been misinformed. A Divine decree is lodged in the make of a man's mind, which takes precedence of all subsequent convictions. Where conscience collides with natural infirmity, Nature is an "iron mountain."

16. The principle above named is often illustrated in the convictions of zealous men respecting the duty of personal effort for the salvation of men to which allusion has been made. Those in whom Nature has not laid the foundation of success in that kind of service rarely do succeed in it. Yet they often feel impelled to it by the type of Christian character which is current in our days. In such cases Nature often has her way, and conscience is angered. A sense of guilt is the consequence, which a wiser reading of natural laws would have forestalled.

17. "Many are the friends of the golden tongue," says a Welsh proverb. But in the service of religion the golden tongues are not a majority. Only one preacher in the history of the pulpit has come down to us as the "golden-mouthed." Ease in private religious colloquy is more rare than in the pulpit. Like kindred gifts, it is not born, it is acquired. Often Nature is so set against it, that it demands study and prayer, and dubious experiment, and perilous ventures, and disciplinary failures, and infinitesimal successes, and a stout persistence, and watchfulness of opportunity, and the foil of judicious silences, and a cultivated sense of the proprieties, and back of all a far insight into human nature, to bring it to any high degree of excellence. It is an accomplishment. In its best development it takes on the look of a fine art. To do it superlatively well, a man must serve his time at it. Such men as the evangelist Moody are not fashioned in a day. In some men the drawbacks of infirmity respecting it amount to positive disability. There are some tongue-tied Christians. A great misfortune befalls them if their religious training has been such that their moral sense attaches exclusive or supreme sacredness to the duty which is out of their power.

18. Conscience sometimes needs to be liberalized in its judgments of men whose chief end in living is the accumulation of wealth. We call such men misers, worldlings, grovellers; and some of them are such. But other some find the design of God

in their creation in money-making. As there are working-bees in a hive, so are there natural money-makers in every civilized society. They are made for that service to the world in their intuitions. They are born to it in their surroundings and opportunities. Often it is an endowment which has come down to them through generations of an accumulative ancestry. All men have iron in their blood. Some men have gold. It is their duty to be rich. As it is the duty and the honor of some men to be poor, so is it the duty and the peril of other men to be rich. They sin if they are not so. It was a virtue in John Calvin that when he died he did not leave money enough to pay the expenses of his funeral. That would have been no virtue in George Peabody.

19. An East India merchant of Newburyport in its prime once remarked: "I do not understand it; it is due to no merit of mine; but my ventures never fail. I never lost a ship or a cargo. If I put a dollar on a shingle and send it to sea, it comes back to me doubled." It was that man's duty to be rich. Only a contracted conscience would have forbidden it. Every man should find his religion in the thing he was made for. The end of God in his creation should be his end in living. Christian heroism can aim no higher: Christian martyrdom can achieve no more. Once admit as a working principle of conscience that secular vocations are intrinsically as sacred as that of missionary services, and Christian living

becomes as broad in its range of possibilities as it is lofty in the reach of its aim.

20. Real life illustrates this in grand example. The elder Frelinghuysen of New Jersey, in his early manhood, desired to choose the ministry instead of the law as his profession. But probably he served God more usefully in the United States Senate, where he was for many years what Wilberforce was to the British Parliament, — the conscience of the whole body, — than if he had given his life to a mission to the Zulus. General Havelock believed that he was living for Christ in leading his cavalry to the victories of English civilization in India, more efficiently than if he had spent his days in a curacy in the heathendom of London. Who shall say that he was not? The order of his superior in an emergency was: "Turn out Havelock's regiment for that service; they are never drunk, and they never run." That told a grand story of Havelock's moral consecration of his work in India.

21. The moral sense, enlightened by Christian training, is so elastic in its versatility that it appears paradoxical in its embrace of things dissimilar. In the majority of men it does not send out the *antennæ* of its affinities to the fine arts. These have been defined as "the arts of pleasure." They are often degraded to serve "the lust of the eyes and the pride of life." Yet they are the "end of God in the creation" of some men. Some of the masterpieces of mediæval art were the

work of days and nights of prayer. The temple of Solomon was not more religiously designed and built than were some of the cathedrals of Central Europe. Madonnas which are the wonder of the world were painted by men who worshipped them. Conscience claims regency in everything that a man should aim to do or to be. The word "ought" is the sovereign of all vocabularies.

22. God is interested in the humblest of the mechanic arts. Who inspired Bezaleel to "devise cunning works, to work in gold and silver and brass"? One of the most commonplace of trades has been hallowed for all time by the fact that our Lord was probably a carpenter for fifteen years. If a man can make shovels better than he can do anything else, then his "calling of God in Christ Jesus" is to make shovels. It is a high calling. His work may be uplifted into the realm of "the sublime and beautiful" by the motive force which he puts into it. That may uplift him as well. One of the most eminently useful men in Massachusetts spent his life in the manufacture of pins. A life of working sympathy with Christ, though passed in the forecastle or in a coal mine, will make a *man* of anybody. Angels will respect him.

23. Our moral nature is many-sided. Its full development involves principles of which one qualifies another. The views foregoing are modified by the fact that conscience finds one of its natural allies in reverence for mind as the superior of matter. Dr. Johnson observed that whatever

makes a man more thoughtful of the future than of the present elevates him in the scale of thinking beings. The same is true of anything which gives him an adequate appreciation of mind as the sovereign of matter. In the conduct of life and the building of character on Christian principles, we find occasion to apply this, among other things, to benevolent activities. Without it we fall into a low grade of benefactions.

24. A man once held office in a church in Boston, who was severely conscientious in self-discipline, but who could not see the necessity of colleges and institutes of science. The "Boston Shoe and Stocking Society," which watched over the necessities of neglected children, was his pet above all other benevolent organizations. He once spoke contemptuously of an audience assembled to hear a lecture from Professor Agassiz on Ichthyology. "Fifteen hundred full-grown men and women," said he, "spending an hour to hear a man talk about the construction of a Connecticut River shad!" Yes, they were "full-grown," and he was not. His generous contributions to objects of charity never rose in spirit above the level of his shoestrings.

25. Ours is a materialistic age. It exalts wealth immoderately in its measurements of men. The consecration of wealth is esteemed the most effective way of doing good. We call it "substantial" benevolence; as if a thought had less substance than a dollar, and character had less weight than

gold. How many of the thousands who have heard and read it have appreciated the reply of Agassiz to an offer of a lucrative office: "I have no time to spend in making money."

26. Reverence for mind as the superior of matter in conscientious ways of living changes all this. It lifts character to a loftier grade of being. We learn from it that to make men is a nobler achievement than to make things. "A man's life consisteth not in the things which he possesseth." A "McCormick Reaper" is a marvellous invention, but to have trained the boy, McCormick, and steered his life clear of the perils of youth into the solidity of manhood, was a greater thing. Ruskin says: "It is better to build a beautiful human creature than to build a beautiful dome." Sir Humphry Davy's remark, "My best discovery was Michael Faraday," contained a principle of all the nobler uses of life in beneficent activity. Every man has it in him to "discover" another man. Insular living is obsolete. It belonged to the age of the cloister and the hermitage. Yet character as contracted and monotonous as that of the monastery may grow from the concentration of moral sensibilities on things, to the neglect of men.

27. Every young man, therefore, before he falls into ruts of materialistic living, should ask himself: "Where is the brother man whom I can help to be or to do the thing he was made for?" Find a lodgement for your thought in something which

can think. When you have found it, make a bee-line for it. Do not dally with preliminaries. Some men spend their lives in getting ready. Let not the evening sun leave you where the morning sun found you. Set something to working, on the spur of the moment, though it be but an ejaculatory prayer, towards the end of transfusing your life into another life. You thus put yourself *en rapport* with the whole illimitable network of spiritual agencies which fills the universe. You become one of the powers of the air and the land and the sea and the untraversed spaces.

28. Another auxiliary of conscience in the conduct of life is a certain blending of emotive force with self-mastery. It creates that balance of intensity and solidity which is essential to the best type of working power. Held under tribute to a good conscience, it reduplicates the force of that as a power of control. It transforms the advices of conscience into decrees.

29. Do we not find among the emphatic men of the world a class whose first impression upon us is that of their intensity? They are not merely men of impetus; they are that and more. They have resources which seem as if moved from underground. The intensity which they put into their life's work resembles the still, red heat of kindled anthracite. Often they are silent men. But their thinking goes out to other men in action, which makes them involuntary leaders. From men of this class come seers of distant truths and pioneers

of coming revolutions. Whatever their life's work is, they take it up as if they were made for it only. They do it with a grand self-abandonment.

30. On further acquaintance with them, the men now referred to disclose to us, in alliance with their intensity, a self-collection which gives them weight and poise. Their will-power is put to service primarily in self-control. Many are great in will-power towards other men. They are full of will; that is, wil-ful. But the class now under review are great in will-power, in the form of self-mastery. By sheer weight of character and singleness of aim, they hold well in hand their impetus. They do not lose their balance in the rapids of affairs. They live a solid central life. Centrifugal and centripetal forces offset each other and keep them clear of tangents. Their orbits are planetary, not cometary. Men call them level-headed, and say of them: "We always know where to find them."

31. It is marvellous how promptly other men call men of this balanced character to leadership in emergencies. They are always in demand in the making of history. They always have the right of way. We call them to represent us in Church and State. We never give them instructions. We should as soon think of giving instructions to sun-dials. Their thought is our vote.

32. In the published account of the catastrophe on the Eastern Railroad at Revere, some years ago, it was said that there was one man who sprang

unbidden to the post of control. In the horrors and agonies of the scene, he was the only man who was master of circumstances and of himself. He alone "knew what to do next." Nobody knew who he was, or whence he came. He had no official authority. But he took authority, as by right of the strongest. He said to this man, "Go," and he went; and he said to that man, "Do this," and he did it. By common consent, the awestricken crowd turned to him as the born leader of them all. He possessed that rare proportion of emotive force and self-government which gives control of other men in crises.

On a limited scale this illustrates the style of manhood always demanded in the making of history. The success of such men is foreordained. It was written in the decree of their creation.

33. This kind of intense yet consolidated character becomes imperial in its command of men and its subjection of events, when in consecrated alliance with a good conscience. It gives to Christian character depth and breadth and a huge momentum. It redoubles in appearance the amount of conscience; lifts it above pettifogging scruples; holds it clear of popular superstitions; and gives it a propelling force in the government of men, which has the steadiness and stillness of the planets. In great religious awakenings, such men know how to be progressive without running wild. They know how to be conservative without blocking the way.

34. Other things being equal, character made up of balanced opposites is the style of manhood which in varying degrees Christianity tends to develop. Christianity has a wonderful command of proportion in the making of a man. According to the amount of character which each man's nature can carry, it puts the two elements of force and weight in even poise into men of average abilities. Under its inspiration, the best work of the world is done by men of sense rather than by men of genius.

35. The moral sense finds a capital ally in the sense of personal honor. So high has this virtue ranked among civilized graces that it has sometimes usurped the place of conscience. Men of noble birth have made it a substitute for religious faith. When Lord Chesterfield was inquired of what was his religious faith, he replied: "I am an English gentleman." The germinating of this virtue is one of the first premonitions which boyhood feels of coming manhood. Often it takes precedence of conscientious principle. The dialect of the playground has coined a word for it, — "honor-bright." Even thieves proverbially cling to it when all other virtues have taken flight.

The design of God in interweaving this principle with the fibres of our moral being in such close affinity with conscience appears to be to furnish an auxiliary inspiration to its judgments where they are obscure, and an auxiliary force where their authority is weak. The resultant

working of the two allies often is to tone up the whole man to a loftier ideal of character and of conduct.

36. Debility in the sense of honor is the moral disease most frequently charged upon the character of otherwise conscientious men. In nothing else is the popular criticism of Christian professions so severe. Men say of a certain Christian believer, representative of a class: "He is a pious man; but he will do mean things. His religion is of coarse grain. He has the gift of prayer, but a tongue as glib in coloring the facts in a trade. He will not tell lies, but he tells very corpulent truths. He is not a thief, but men like to have things in writing when they have dealings with him."

37. Cynical criticism is never just. But it is often sprinkled with iotas of truth which a man who is scrupulous in the point of honor will not ignore. In real life, up to the limit of his culture a thorough-bred Christian is a thorough-bred gentleman. He cannot do a mean thing. He will not equivocate. He will not hang his veracity on the difference between the singular and the plural of a word. His moral sense knows no distinction between his word and his oath. His oath at the Custom-house is as sacred as in the witness-box. In either, he is not afflicted with an intermittent memory. Conscience regulates his silences as honorably as his speech. In secret before God, the meanness of sin augments the burden of his sorrow.

38. It is in the fine points of character chiefly that real life calls for the alliance of conscience with the sense of honor. This is a rough world. Sin is innately coarse-grained and full of gnarls. The usages which it popularizes are degrading. The civilization which it creates, if left to itself, rots. Treacherous and obscure and malign powers are in the air of a fallen world. In such a world life tempts the moral sense to a perilous stretch of fibre. If a Christian is true to his conscientious convictions, he must do many odd and some unrespectable things, as the world goes. Jesus Christ did such things. The toughest trial of a young man's faith often is the loss of social caste to which obedience to his sense of right subjects him.

39. Moreover, the morals of the world are a variable quantity. A sea-captain once sought pastoral advice upon an adventure which had been more satisfactory to his purse than to his Methodist conscience. The contents of his purse burned in his pocket. When he had told his story, the pastor inquired: "Do men of your profession commonly approve of such transactions?" "Oh yes;" he replied, "the morals of the sea are not the morals of the shore." Again came the inquiry: "Did you ever tell your wife and children the story you have told me?" He was dumb. A few months afterwards he wrote that he had made restitution. He could look now his children in the eye.

In such a bewildering labyrinth of right and wrong as that which commerce has built on a chaos

of truths and half-truths and falsehoods and false silences, a man needs every refining and ennobling principle which he can command, to save his conscience from degeneracy and his whole character from caving in.

40. In this point of honor often appears the auxiliary force of a liberal education to a good conscience. It was observed in our Civil War that recent graduates and undergraduates of Yale and Harvard colleges, men of gentle birth and delicate build, though never under fire before, would stand a hotter fire without flinching than robust men of heavier weight and tougher brawn. Certain sensibilities inherited from scholarly fathers, and developed in the still alcoves of libraries, made their sense of honor indomitable in its fidelity to the right. Such men died by the score, to whom it never occurred that they could skulk.

41. The Duke of Wellington observed the same thing at Waterloo, in the sons of the English nobility. When ruder men sneered at their delicate complexion and feminine fingers, he answered: "Yes; but the puppies fight well." A cultivated sense of honor has a fineness of vision and wiry tenacity which are often the very things that conscience needs to enlighten its judgments and make its authority supreme. The blunt thrust of the moral sense needs, on occasions, to be re-enforced by the suave impulsions of self-respect. Exigencies and surprises occur in which it is well if a man is too proud to smirch his soul.

42. That was a thing to be remembered and revered through all time, which Algernon Sydney wrote to his father from his dungeon, a few days before he left it for the scaffold: "I have ever had it in my mind, that when God should cast me into such condition that I cannot save my life but by doing an indecent thing, He shows me that the time has come when I should resign it." The world will never take the name of such a man in vain. Yet every man of rounded and finished Christian character is such a rounded and finished gentleman.

43. The principle of the education of the moral sense, to which allusion is elsewhere made, is often illustrated in modern experience. The Rev. John Newton, to whom also reference has been made, was converted to spiritual Christianity before he had abandoned the slave-trade. He says that on his last voyage to the African coast for a cargo, he "experienced sweeter and more frequent hours of Divine communion than he had ever before known." Again he writes of his infamous occupation: "No other employment affords greater advantages for promoting the life of God in the soul, especially to one who has command of a ship"! This is the testimony of a slave-trader. Yet the piety of John Newton in the record is scarcely more questionable than that of St. Paul.

44. The appalling contradiction is to be reconciled by the same principle which interprets the ethical mysteries of the Old Testament. The

moral sense of England under which John Newton was born and bred took no cognizance of the slave-trade as a sin. It was legitimate commerce. English law authorized it. The English navy furnished consorts for its protection. English statesmen participated in the profits of it. English bishops blessed it as a missionary enterprise for the Christianizing of Africa. The national conscience made no protest against its barbarity. Only an individual, here and there, had discovered its hideous depravity; and at him the people wagged their heads, saying: "He is a madman." Ships engaged in the slave-trade often were christened with Biblical names. The vessel in which Sir John Hawkins brought a cargo of slaves from Africa to the West Indies in 1564 bore the name "Jesus." Its commander attributed his mercantile success to "Almighty God . . . who never suffers His elect to perish"!

In that morally putrescent atmosphere John Newton had lived from his birth. His moral sense was drugged. It gave out delirious judgments; with slow and stertorous respiration it came into spiritual life. He wrote hymns for Christian worship which the Church sings to-day, before he found out the depth of the moral abyss in which his moral nature was rotting.

45. The same principle explains some of the phenomena of conscientious persecution. An unenlightened but an honest conscience founded the Inquisition. Torquemada looked unflinchingly on

the agonies of his victims on the rack; but all the while he wore beneath his undervest a chain-shirt filled with metallic prongs turned inward upon his living flesh. To save his own soul he endured torture equal perhaps to that which he inflicted to save the soul of a heretic. Philip the Second, after capping the climax of judicial tortures in the extermination of heresy, endured for months equal agony, in which he died like a saint.

46. Fearful are the contortions of the human conscience, and infinite is the condescension of God in its disciplinary training. The enormities which it perpetrates, when left to the alternate stupor and exasperation of a fallen stake, give us some hint of what it might have been and might have done if the way of salvation had been thrust upon mankind impulsively, without a preliminary process of moral discipline.

47. The first thing requisite to the recovery of a fallen race was to *create* a conscience which could take in and appropriate a redemptive economy, without perverting it to a more appalling and hopeless downfall. This was the work of time. In this, as in all other works of God, there is a conspicuous absence of high pressure. God seems never to be in haste. No magnitude of evil crowds His plans to their completion before their time. "Rapidity of movement," observes Mr. Gladstone, "was no part of the providential design." Ages must come and go. Generation must hand over to generation the fruits of discipline through a

long line of moral inheritance before the fulness of time could appear. That educational history the Old Testament records.

48. A good conscience is good sense. It is level-headed in its judgments. It limits a man's responsibility to practicable things. Not only that, but to things practicable to him. St. Paul in his casuistry to the Corinthians puts under the sovereignty of conscience the broad principle of common sense. When Hortensius invites Marcus to meet Aurelius at a banquet, if Marcus happens to be a Christian, the Apostle would not counsel him to provoke the contempt of the pagan gentleman whose guest he is, by asking where the esculents on the table came from. He virtually advises: "Behave like the gentleman that you are; act like a man of good sense and ask no questions for conscience' sake. Where your meat and figs and wine came from is not your business; it is the business of your host. It belongs to his conscience, not to yours."

49. The apostolic principle of the limitations of conscience covers an immense variety of questions of Christian casuistry in all ages. It settles all those cases of scruple respecting food and drink and purchase and sale which are involved inextricably in organic sin. To go beyond or under that principle in the application of scruples would plunge us into an interminable jungle of inquiries in which conscience would become a Jesuit. We should soon find ourselves questioning whether

we may eat or drink or wear or buy or sell or give or barter anything respecting which anybody has committed sin. We should be in the plight of the Hindoo devotee to whom animal life was so sacred that he chose starvation rather than to drink a drop of water in which the microscope had discovered to him the gambols of a thousand animalcules invisible to the naked eye.

50. A caution which inexperienced piety often needs is that we should avoid so putting things that conscientious scruples shall have the look, to others, of religious pettifogging. Frederick Robertson has emphasized the fact that "scrupulosity about laws positive generally slides into laxity about the eternal laws of right and wrong." This is that infirmity of a weak conscience which subjects good men to the charge of cant. No other sign of a canting piety is so common or so sure as a queasy conscience in little things balanced by a lax conscience in great things. But in a great right mind, the moral sense is the faculty of supreme dignity.

Under Christian enlightenment it supports the dignity of Christian conduct in a multitude of things otherwise liable to the world's contempt.

51. Sin in a good man's consciousness may never be all that his severe self-judgment declares it to be. It has offsets and alleviations. Even its temporary conquests of the protesting will are not what they seem to be to suspended faith. The moral sense, enlightened and balanced by good

sense, never plunges a good man into despair and leaves him there.

Washington Allston was once afflicted with a distressing nervous malady. In that condition he was on one occasion tempted by an incontrollable impulse to profane speech. The reaction of course overwhelmed him with remorse. Probably God did not judge the artist's moral defeat as he himself did. Coleridge, bringing his philosophy to bear on the incident, very aptly said: "Allston should have said, 'Nothing is I but my will.'" If he did not deliberately will the wrong, it was no more sin than the profaneness of a sailor's parrot. Good sense should not permit conscience to degenerate into a detective, eager to ferret out the secret vagaries of a sick man's brain.

52. The foregoing incident suggests also that there may be strata of virtuous character which a man's own mental introspection does not turn up to the light of his own consciousness. He may be a better man than he seems to himself to be. Bunyan's Pilgrim would have been a better man if he had discovered sooner than he did the grace which was germinant within him. Bunyan himself would have been saved from great suffering and from some sin, if his conscience had been more healthfully instructed and mollified by good sense. His "bell-ringing," of which he accused himself as a sin with such savage fidelity, was not to the common sense of men a damnable crime. Yet he damned himself for it without mercy. There is a

law of unconscious virtue which a delicately trained conscience needs to apply to its lurid flashes of self-conviction. Character, in both extremes, seems to hide itself from self-inspection. In the long run, charity is more truthful than severity. Censoriousness even to oneself is sure to be false in some of its judgments.

Oberlin, it is reported, once fell upon his knees in a remorseful prayer, because he had despatched a letter in which he had neglected to cross the *t*'s and dot the *i*'s accurately. Ought he not to have known better than to picture God to his imagination as an irascible writing-master on the watch for blunders of chirography?

54. The best development of the Christian graces, next to that of our Lord, is that which may be distinguished as the Pauline development. With profound sensibility it unites a sylvan strength which bears without despondency honest convictions of sin.

In their private portraitures of sin, our fathers were sometimes morbid and extravagant. They dealt excessively with superlatives. Not that they exaggerated guilt in itself considered. No language can do that. But guilt never exists to be in itself considered. It exists in the concrete, and in the concrete it is never in this world absolute and unmitigated. Is a bad man ever as bad as he can be? Guilt in its finished and supreme malignity exists nowhere but in the world of despair.

55. The self-convictions of a conscientious man

should be balanced by the principle that his religion has something yet to do for him if his mental habit is not one of gladness. A good conscience is a conscience at rest. Mental suffering has no place in the Christian theory of holy living. Purgatorial suffering has no more right to be in this world than in the next. Joy, in varying degree from peace to ecstasy, is the Christian life. Song is its natural language. There was a natural groundwork for that provision which an Italian nobleman made for an unintermittent and unending anthem of praise in the chapel of his palace. This is a symbol of St. John's dramatic representations of Heaven, in which the redeemed are occupied chiefly in holy song. Their moral nature, even when exercised upon the stupendous mystery of God's retributive decrees, is exalted and kept in even balance of its sensibilities, by the service of thanksgiving.

56. Among the balanced virtues which an educated conscience fosters are those of a profound reverence for the supernatural, and freedom from popular superstitions. A Christian believer thoroughly trained in the good sense of the Scriptures is not given to Biblical sortilege in his devotional habits. He does not hold conference with the dead at light-footed tables with light-headed sitters around them. He never sees ghosts, or, like Talfourd, he sees too many to be overawed by them. He does not fear to set sail on a Friday, nor to dine with thirteen at the table. He does not fore-

bode a death in the family if a dog howls at midnight, nor think that ill luck is in the air if he sees the new moon over the left shoulder. He does not, as a Boston merchant did, kick every tree on the way to his store to insure good luck for the day. He does not go back and start anew on his morning walk, as Dr. Johnson did, if he began it with his left foot foremost. He does not nail horse-shoes over the door of his dwelling to keep witches at bay. Believers of the "level-headed" conscience, by keeping their faith clear of such vagaries, make religion respected by making it respectable.

VIII.

OUR SACRED BOOKS.

1. Every great religion which has created epochs in history has been the religion of a Book. Of such historic religions, Christianity is the oldest, the purest, the most prolific of best things, and the most enduring. To-day it is the only one which has a future. Its Sacred Books contain the oldest cohesive literature extant. They contain the only credible narrative of the origin of man, of the infancy of the race, of the septenary division of time, of the introduction of sin, of the cause and the moral significance of death, and of the promise of redemption. No other sacred records present a respectable outline of the destiny of the race from the birth of the first man to the death of the last man.

2. Our holy books are signalized by the evidences they contain that their teachings are to be disseminated chiefly by oral discourse. The religions of the world may be classified as the religions which can and the religions which cannot be preached. The religion of the Bible is pre-eminently one of the former class. Christianity has created the pulpit. It addresses the reason and the conscience

of man. It asks no credence without proof, asserts no claim which does not commend itself to the common sense and the moral sense of mankind. By these instrumentalities and auxiliaries it promises to make conquest of the world.

3. Four features of the Bible adapt it so forcibly to the purpose as to give intimations of the fact that its system of thought is to be propagated by the pulpit. One consists of the correspondences which it reveals to the necessities of the human soul and the intuitions of the human conscience. The second is a remarkable balancing of related truths and welding of half-truths, by which the most intense conceptions which the mind of man can grasp may be enforced without self-contradictions. The third is the frequency and the force with which it expresses truth in laconic forms. The fourth is the fact that it is pervaded by an intense personality from beginning to end. Every practised preacher has discovered that such materials have a superlative fitness to be proclaimed by the magnetism of the human voice. An illustrious churchman of England has remarked upon the adaptations of the Bible to public speech, that it is the only Book extant from which *quotation* is always pertinent. If it had been constructed solely for the purpose of furnishing to the pulpit a thesaurus of texts and themes and other materials of sermons, it could scarcely have been conceived more wisely and put together more skilfully.

4. One of the collateral evidences of the Divine

authority of the Scriptures is their political wisdom. For writings not designed to teach political economy, they are wondrously prolific of ideas fundamental to the building of States. In this respect they are unequalled by any other sacred books known in history.

Liberty as a right of the individual is a corollary from the Christian idea of personal responsibility. Heathen theories of civil government have never made human servitude a wrong in itself considered. The principle of federation as a bond of union among States and of alliance among nations is a Biblical idea. Jonathan Mayhew of Boston in our colonial revolution suggested it as a derivative from the fellowship of churches enjoined by Christ. The principle of a graded judiciary was first announced incidentally to the government of nomadic tribes under the leadership of Moses. The substitution of peaceful expedients in place of war in the abolition of organic wrongs is of Scriptural origin. The Hebrew lawgiver initiated it in legislation upon slavery and polygamy. Bloodless revolutions and tranquil reforms are silent trophies of Christianity. Serfdom in England has never to this day been abolished by act of Parliament. The still force of Biblical ideas has stifled it so gently that English legislation forgot to *say* that it should exist no longer. A finer example does not appear in history of the *modus operandi* by which the Christian Scriptures work out revolution in human governments.

Above all, that fundamental principle on which all durable States are built — that national virtue is the groundwork of national perpetuity — has never been wrought into the building of great nations, except among Christianized races. Political economy has never projected it into national life. Civilization unevangelized has never lifted a people to its level. Experience of the rise and fall of nations has never taught the wisdom of it as a practical principle of government. Plato thought it, but he did not persuade a Grecian State of the size of a Swiss canton to build on it as a foundation of national renown. Only where and when and so far as the holy books of Christianity have made their way into popular thinking has so profound yet so plain a principle either created a great nation or saved it from decay.

5. It is a fact of most solemn import to modern Republics, that the Bible nowhere recognizes democracy as a legitimate form of government, except as it is the superstructure of a Theocracy. The theory of self-government by a people in their own natural right finds no authority in the Scriptures. Advocates of monarchical forms have the Biblical argument in their favor. So far as this, — that the noblest ideal of government must be centred in the sentiment of *loyalty*. And loyalty finds its natural centre in a *person*. Despotism finds its centre in the person of the autocrat. The more nearly an autocrat approaches the dignity of deity in the reverence of his subjects, the more consonant

with Biblical ideas is his right to reign. Constitutional monarchy finds an object of loyalty, in a lame way, in the person of the constitutional sovereign. The rectitude and the stability of all human governments depend on the allegiance of the people to some personal representative of Law. Loyalty of personal beings to impersonal Law is an absurdity. It is reverence of the superior for the inferior. It is obedience of a living person to a lifeless thing. A Republic must find its centre of the loyal sentiment in the Person of the living God. Neither the history of the Old Testament nor the preachings of the New recognize popular governments without the theocratic element underneath. Such is the political wisdom of our sacred oracles.

6. A similar evidence of the Divine origin of the Scriptures appears in a feature to which reference has been already made — the fidelity with which they disclose the secret qualities and unconscious tendencies of human nature. The amazement of the woman of Samaria at our Lord's knowledge of her unwritten biography is an example of the incisive force of the Bible as *detective* of human character in all times. The storied personages of the Old Testament are antitypes of men as real life discovers them in all ages. No other volume in all literature is so human in its disclosures of man, and at the same time so Godlike in its revelation of God. The junction of the two is a premonition of the Day of Judgment. Man does not

know himself, except through some sort of contact with the Mind of God. The indignation often expressed by hearers of the Gospel, at what they suppose to be intentional personalities of the pulpit, springs naturally from the preaching of a revealed religion. A revelation of the thoughts of God starts the retributive machinery of the human conscience.

7. Many of the objections to the ethics of the Old Testament spring from ignoring the necessity of an *education* of the human conscience in the early ages. The Old Testament is mainly a record of a nation's birth and of its training in moral sense. There are degrees and varieties of conscience. The age, the race, the nation, the tribe, has its conscience. Men who appreciate well the education of a national intellect are often slow to recognize the development of a national conscience. Yet the ethics of the Old Testament depend on that stage of the national history which it records. It is unphilosophical to judge the moral sense of one who represents the beginning of that process of moral discipline, by that of one who represents its end. A Hebrew conscience and a Christian conscience may be separated by two thousand years of spiritual training. St. Paul may have taught as elementary principles ideas which were not intellectually conceivable by the mind of Abraham.

8. The ethics of the Old Testament find their toughest knot in the command of God to Abraham

to immolate his son. That command probably met with no recoil whatever in the moral sense of the patriarch. His parental affection was shocked. His patriarchal hopes and ambitions were shattered. But the story bears no trace of moral reprobation of the deed. Parental sacrifice of children was one of the established customs of the age. It was done in the discharge of a sacerdotal function. In the ethics of the time it was a parental prerogative. It was founded on the same principle as that of the sacrifices of the first brothers of the race — that of consecrating to God the best and the best beloved. We do not know that the act of God forbidding it had any precedent in the patriarch's experience. The whole bearing of the victim also gives no evidence of any sense of the right of resistance to it as an act of barbarism. That was a barbarous age. The conscience of the age was in twilight. Men saw spiritual things only as by the light of a solitary morning star.

9. It is absurd, therefore, to hold the moral sense of the Chaldean patriarch to the same vision of right and wrong which four thousand years of moral training have revealed to us. Under his moral conditions and with his moral precedents he would have been guiltless in the commission of a deed for which the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has incarcerated a man for life as a maniac. So vast are the diversities contingent on the education of conscience by the inherited discipline of ages.

10. It is startling, yet refreshing, to note in the Biblical treatment of suffering, the boldness with which it is attributed to the agency of God. We find no adroit concealment or disguise of the Divine Hand. We discover no obtrusion of second causes to relieve the appalling facts of history. The way of science is to evade the name of God; the way of revelation is to proclaim and exult in it. Even when tragic story "makes both the ears of men to tingle," the more fearful it is, the more emphatically does inspiration attribute it to the plan of God. A strain of theocratic sovereignty runs through all the teachings of the Bible respecting the origin of suffering. It never happens; it is inflicted. It never springs up in a night; it is foreordained. God thought of it ages before it came. He cared enough for the sufferer to think of him, to single him out and individualize him from uncounted millions; to call him by name, to measure his necessities, to plan the outline of his destiny, and to select and arrange his appointed discipline; and this long before he was born. Every sufferer in this "hurt world" is enclosed in a golden network of eternal and benignant decrees.

11. The treatment of the sorrowing by our holy books presents, in one respect, a striking contrast to that suggested by the noblest poetry in uninspired literature. Our great poets, except when they write under the inspiration of Biblical ideas, direct us for comfort to the works of Nature.

They celebrate in lofty song the forests and the rivers and the silent skies, for their tranquillizing influence upon us, in the agitations of a great sorrow. They tell us that "Nature never did betray the heart that loved her." But coming down to the hard facts of life, who of us ever found it so? Are there not deeps, and "lower deep," beneath the billows of a great affliction into which Nature cannot follow us? At her best, she is passionless and unresponsive. We feel the absence of reciprocity. She hears no prayer. We interrogate her wisdom, and she tells us, "It is law." We throw ourselves upon her mercy, and she responds, "It is law." She knows no deity but Law. When we are rocking on the surges of intolerable suffering, what do we care for Law? Law is timely and at home in our laboratories and observatories; but in our darkened homes, and in the awful solitude which makes the packed streets a wilderness to us, we need some other friend than Nature. Yet Poetry has no other for us, except when she rehearses the simple Biblical hymns which we teach to our children, and sing at our morning and evening prayers.

12. Suffering is elevated in dignity by the Biblical representations of it as one of the Divine instruments consecrated to man's redemption. It is not an isolated anomaly. It is not a mystery, the solution of which we must find, or seek and not find, in its own impenetrable darkness. It has part in a grand alliance of beneficent agencies.

Not merely is it that suffering is so ruled and overruled by a strategic Providence that glimpses of benevolent design can be extorted from its history. This mystery of pain is a *gift* which takes rank in dignity with the gift of prayer. It proclaims eternal purposes of which a risen and ascended Saviour is the culmination.

13. The Scriptural view of the discipline of pain reaches its climax of dignity in the fact that it was one of the factors, perhaps the chief, in the personal discipline of Christ for his redemptive mission. The Bible brings afflicted men and women into a very sacred alliance, in its revelation of Him as a Man of Sorrows. What they suffer He suffers. "In all their affliction He was afflicted." Occult emanations of sympathy from the heart of our Lord are going into all the homes where believing men and women mourn. That sympathy is vibrating on the air the world over.

14. When Isaiah's mysterious visions of a suffering Messiah were uttered, there was not a blind asylum, nor a retreat for the insane, nor a school for deaf-mutes, nor a hospital for incurable invalids, nor a home for orphans, nor a refuge for the fallen, in the world. Sufferers were deemed the objects of Divine desertion. The wisest of men placed their dead in the tomb, or on the funeral pyre, doubting, as Cicero did when his only daughter Althea died, whether the doctrine of the immortality of the soul were a truth or a myth. It was on the ear of such a world that the words of Messianic promise first fell.

God. Look at an Egyptian mummy — is that a *man?* Yet it is the only reprisal that death has to boast of.

18. A service of very peculiar nature and not generally known connects the books of our faith with the researches of astronomical science. It is well understood by experts in astronomy that a certain complicated *cycle*, which should harmonize certain intricate revolutions of the solar system, has been sought for, for centuries. At last it was, till recently, given up as being beyond the reach of human discovery.

But within a few years an eminent Swiss astronomer professes to have found the long-sought marvel of astronomical science. His researches have been submitted to three distinguished astronomers of the "Royal Academy of Sciences" in Paris. By them it has been pronounced accurate and of practical value.

19. The interesting fact about this astronomical discovery is that the discoverer was first led to suspect the existence of the cycle, by a study of the symbolic prophecies of Daniel. It is well known that the majority of interpreters have found in those prophecies a period of twenty-three hundred years, as the measurement in the prophetic visions, of the time which should elapse between the age of Daniel and the end of the so-called "times of the gentiles"; in other words, the end of this world. The Swiss astronomer — M. de Cheseaux, by name — is a devout believer in the

Scriptures. In reading the symbolic predictions of Daniel, it occurred to him as a hypothesis that this period of twenty-three centuries might be the cycle so long despaired of by experts in astronomical wisdom. On further investigation by astronomical methods, he found that it was even so. The discovery led to that of several other cycles, all involved in the prophetic computations, and by means of which he was able to solve between thirty and forty astronomical and geographical problems.

20. He suggests, plausibly, to say the least, the inquiry: "How happened it that a Hebrew prophet, twenty-three centuries in advance of scientific discovery, *used* that occult cycle in his timing of coming events in the far-distant future?" If he had conversed with the most eminent astronomers of the age, he could not have learned it from them. They knew nothing of its existence. If he had been himself the most accomplished scientist of the century, he could not have discovered it. There were no astronomical instruments in existence by which the requisite observation could be made. The famed astrology of Chaldea, in which he *may* have been an expert, knew nothing of it. For twenty-three centuries that ignorance of the learned world has continued, notwithstanding the immense advances in astronomical knowledge and in the improvement of the instruments of the observatory. Yet all the while the mysterious and unknown cycle lay embedded in the symbolic

prophecies in actual use by the Hebrew seer. How happened that? Not one only but a system of co-ordinate cycles was made the groundwork of prophetic computations. How came that about?

21. The theory of the discoverer is, that a fore-ordained synchronism exists between the movements of the solar system and the developments of human history. The chronologies of the two are one. The mind which contrived the one fore-ordained the other. The clock-work of the material heavens and the clock-work of the history of Man have been created and wound up by the same Being. So reasons the devout astronomer. Of course, none but proficients in astronomical researches who are also proficients in the interpretation of symbolic prophecy can pronounce independently upon the value of the alleged discoveries. But the conditions attending their announcement entitle them to the consideration of Biblical scholars. They place the hallowed books of our religion in very interesting relations to human science.

22. A question concerning our Divine revelation which has been asked through all Christian ages is, Why, in revealing to us so much, has it revealed so little? Why is its impenetrable silence on many things of which the human mind has intense cravings after knowledge?

23. If the earth had no atmosphere, sound could not be audible anywhere on its surface. Beings adjusted to organic life under such conditions might exist here, but speech would be a lost art.

The whole globe would be engulfed in a silence as profound as if the ocean of air at the bottom of which we live were an ocean of water. This would be a world of deaf-mutes.

Like such a world often appears the state we live in, of comparative ignorance of another life, and under an absolute embargo upon intercourse with our brethren of the stars. Who of us has not asked of the heavens on a starry night: "Why is this universe so silent?" Who has not longed to hear the legendary "music of the spheres"? Why, even in our sacred books, has God revealed so little? An invisible God we can see the necessity of, in the nature of things; but a speechless Deity, with lips close shut to the majority of our questionings — who can solve this mystery?

24. Yet some reasons we can see for God's silence, especially in a revelation by a book. For instance, it hardly needs saying that the Bible is silent upon many things because they are not essential to its religious purposes. We are content with other literature if it is true to its object. That a poem is no more than a poem, a history nothing else than a history, a drama no other than a drama, we do not reckon as defects in their construction. By the same test we estimate the Scriptures. It is no fault in a revelation that it does not disclose undiscovered sciences, or the histories of other worlds. That Moses knew nothing of the telephone is no blemish in the Book of Genesis. That St. John did not discover from

Patmos the belts of Saturn is no defect in the Apocalypse.

25. This principle of fitness to its aim rules out of the Bible the greater part of the sum of human knowledge. That it is a Bible, and not an encyclopedia, is its first excellence. One of the renowned encyclopedias of Europe contains two hundred and twenty quarto volumes. A single Chinese work extends to five hundred volumes. For a revelation from God we need not an alcove of volumes like these, but a book which will give us the *maximum* of substance in the *minimum* of bulk. We need a portable book. We need a book which a child can read and revere as a mother's keepsake. We need a volume which will not weary by its immensity the eye of the aged or the ear of the dying.

26. The Scriptures are silent upon many things, also, because they are only matters of curiosity or of marvel. We reasonably expect a revelation from God to commend itself to our respect by the dignity of its themes. Even its treatment of necessities would suffer in our esteem if it came to us fringed with frivolities and kickshaws. Our libraries contain volumes of the "Curiosities of Literature." A revelation from God ought not to be of those. Would the way to Heaven be more clear or alluring if its discovery came to us bound up with Dr. Kane's researches in the Arctic Sea? The Scriptures have not disclosed to us the locality of Heaven; but they do what is infinitely more to

the purpose. They disclose that there *is* a Heaven, and the spiritual highway to it. Philosophers have racked their wisdom over the origin of sin, the possibility of a fall from holiness, and the probable fortune of the race if it had not fallen. The Bible by its reticence discourages such inquiries, but it does more than to answer them, in assuring us that the race *has* fallen, and how it can be uplifted from its ruins.

27. A youthful Bible class once debated the question: "What is the rank in the Heavenly life of the world's great men? Alexander, Cæsar, Shakespeare, Washington — where are they now, and what?" The Book wisely refrains from touching distinctions which have no reference to its one great intent, — to teach what *all* men must do to be saved. A man of scientific tastes once said that the first question he would ask on entering Heaven would be: "Where is Sir Isaac Newton?" A boy in a Sunday-school at the "Five Points" in New York said that the man whom he wanted to see first there was "Goliath!" Each one to his taste! But why should the Bible satisfy the curiosity of one of these explorers of the hidden life rather than that of the other?

28. The Word of God is silent upon many things because they are not timely to this initial and preparatory stage of human development. The advances of human knowledge in this world show the forecast of an overruling Mind in the fact that knowledges come to the front when they

are needed. Timeliness is a grand factor in the history of inventions and discoveries. Historians see a foreordained coincidence between the discovery of America and the state of the nations when the discovery was made. One-third of the globe was hidden from the eye of civilized man till it was needed for the progress of arts and sciences and civil freedom.

So it was with various other inventions and discoveries of which mention has been made elsewhere. The statesman of our Civil War remarked the good fortune of the Union in the discovery of the oil wells of Pennsylvania when we needed a new product for exchange with Europe to take the place of blockaded cotton.

On the minutest, as well as the grandest, scale of affairs, wise men observe the recurrence of the proverbial "nick of time" in the progressions of human knowledge. Two angels of observation hover over this world on poised wings. The angel of demand and the angel of supply keep watch, the one over the world's necessities, and the other over the resources of genius and the junctures of auxiliary circumstance. Each keeps time with the other with the fidelity of clock-work.

29. We venture to believe, therefore, that a similar law of timeliness governs the higher advances of knowledge which arch over the two worlds of sense and spirit. Some knowledges are timely to this world, and others to that. Some discoveries fit a state of probation, others a state of moral

repose. Some are congenial with a world of sense, others not even intelligible except to disembodied mind. Some are pertinent to the infancy and some to the maturity of an endless life.

All analogies suggest that in that upper stratum of interests, as in this of mundane affairs, this factor of timeliness could not be ignored without damage. The neglect of it might involve eternal loss. The conditions of this world and those of the next it may not be safe to interchange. That might be like transposing the conditions of this globe, which has water and an atmosphere, with those of its satellite, which has neither. Reserve of knowledge till the ripening of conditions is one of the signal features of God's wisdom. The future ages of our immortality may have great epochs of discovery. Then we may learn the secret blessing of our profoundest ignorance here of things for which the time has not yet come.

30. God's realm of reserve is large, and dense with mysteries. Who can say that He does not hold in wise concealment there, for the reason here given, the mystery of the origin of sin, and of the necessity of endless retributive penalties in the government of the universe? The world is no nearer to-day to a solution of these problems than it was when the patriarch, perhaps four thousand years ago, inquired of the silent heavens of Arabia: "Wherefore do the wicked live?" But the time may come in the progress of the future life when responses to inquiry on these and kindred subjects

will be the natural and inevitable discoveries of the age. We may then seem to ourselves to solve these mysteries intuitively. We may discover that previous lines of history and of research have all been converging to that fulness of times. It may then appear that to have antedated those responses by throwing them back into a life of comparative infancy would have wrought irreparable damage.

31. The first life in a series of endless progressions must be like no other in its *inexperience.* Inexperience, even aside from probationary contingencies, is itself peril. In such a life, reserve of knowledge in some things is as much a protection as a revelation of it in other things. We read of a traveller who once crossed a bridge over a raging torrent in darkness so absolute that his eyes, shut or open, made no difference. The morning revealed that the bridge had been entirely swept away except the single timber on which he had crossed the rapids. If he had known the danger, his trepidation of nerve would have cost him his life. Similar to this may be our ignorance as a factor in the protection of our inexperience. Knowledge of all that we crave to know might lay a burden of astounding truths greater than they could bear upon minds unbalanced and sensibilities distempered by sin. To fire the world with controversy over such revelations might result in moral convulsions. "Are ye able to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? Ye know not what ye ask."

32. We know, for example, that beings whose moral nature is re-enforced by the tonic disclosures of a redeemed life do bear, without a quiver of an eyelid, the sight of the symbol of endless pains from a world of incorrigible guilt. But who dares to say that he could now bear the same vision with the same equipoise of faith? To us it might be as if we were caught up in the twinkling of an eye into the upper layers of the atmosphere in which aeronauts soar with laboring breath and bursting blood-vessels on the verge of asphyxia.

The analogies of this world lead us to believe that through the unending succession of discoveries of God which lie before us we shall find, as we do here, the constant recurrence of the critical "nick of time." We shall be told what, and when, and where, it will be safe for us to know.

33. A profound hint of the Divine policy in revelation is given in a fragment of Old Testament biography. The disclosures made to Moses in the mount seem to have stimulated his desire to know more. He craved to look with unveiled eye upon the glory of Jehovah. Mark the answer to his prayer: "I will put thee in the cleft in the rock; I will cover thee with My hand while I pass by." It appears, then, that converse of the finite with the infinite mind involves peril to finite faculties. There are truths which no man in this world *can* know and live.

34. A *protective* element, therefore, runs through the Divine economy of revelation. Our ignorance

here is the "cleft in the rock." The thoughtful kindness of God hides us from revelations which would be untimely to our conditions. But for this, our growth in character might be convulsive and catastrophic in its working. We exult in the dignity of knowledge. We make it the synonym of power. But in moral surroundings which make knowledge unseasonable, the blessing of ignorance is incalculably greater.

35. Scientists believe that they see evidences of a typical relationship between this material world and the moral world of whose redemption it is the theatre. The elemental forces of the one are symbols of corresponding elements in the other. What, then, are the moral developments of which earthquakes and volcanoes are symbolic? To disclose them to us before the fulness of time might make the whole head sick and the whole heart faint. It might work out a ruin of human faculties more irreparable than the fall of Eden. A ruin it might be of which insanity is but a feeble premonition. That moral repose which is requisite to healthy growth in likeness to God is of more worth than intellectual visions.

36. The Book is silent also upon some things because reason either certifies them, or makes them immensely probable. When our Lord was about to part with His disciples, He was thoughtful of their infantine faith. He saw that they were struggling with destiny as the rest of us do in times of bereavement. They were brooding over the mys-

teries which death suggests but never solves. Where was He going? Would He be beyond their hearing? Should they see His face again? Would He come back to them a conqueror and a prince? Or would His voice die in impenetrable silence, like those other men of mystery? What, where, how far away, under what conditions, was that unseen world of which their inspired books spoke as the "land of darkness"?

To ease their minds, He says to them: "Do not trouble about such things. My Father's dwelling-place is large and hospitable. I go to prepare a home for you. My home shall be yours. *If it were not so, I would have told you.*" May not many of our unanswered questions be determined in the same way? Some things which we wish to believe, and dare not, are as certain as such things can be. Why should we ask for more?

37. For instance, are we morally free, or are we bondmen in sin, doomed helplessly to suffer for a heritage of guilt? The Scriptures do not affirm or deny. But surely something within us settles that. Dr. Johnson gave the argument in a nut-shell: "A man knows it, sir, and that is the whole of it." And can we not hear the Master say: "If it were not so, I would have told you"? Shall we recognize friends in heaven? Nature unhesitatingly responds: Why not? And does not our Lord seem to add: "If it were not so, I would have told you"? Are infants saved who die before infantile character is set in changeless

groove? Undoubtedly. The common sense of men determines that. And from God's Word do we not hear the echo: "If it were not so, I would have told you"?

A volume might be compiled of inquiries like these which carry their answers in the asking. In the material world, God never does needless things. Not a leaf opens in the springtime which is not worth a life. Much more in a supernatural revelation should there be no wasted wisdom. That which the skies, and the seas, and the forests, and the prairies are forever chanting in our ears in majestic cadence, we should not ask prophets to teach us, or martyrs to witness to us.

38. Our holy books do not once prove to us the Being of God. Yet faith knows no more necessary truth. Why were not the archives of the universe ransacked for indubitable evidences? Atheism would so easily have been struck dumb forever. We might fancy that angels would have come trooping to earth to assure us. But when they do come and look over the shoulder of him who is elected to record for us a revelation from God, His Being is never once named as a subject of dialectic discourse. Why? Because no man can in reason doubt it. Nature settles it to every honest and balanced mind. A man who doubts or denies it is usually credulous to the verge of dotage respecting things immensely less probable. He is a moral Nyctalops who is blind at midday, and has the eye of an eagle at midnight.

God trusts the evidences of His own existence to the necessities of men. Lord Bacon spoke the voice of the ages when he said: "I would rather believe all the fables in the Koran, than that this world has no God." The learned world goes on piling up libraries of proof and disproof, and reply and rejoinder, respecting the First Cause. Meanwhile the Spirit of the Book is looking calmly on, and saying never a word. His silence means more than speech. It means: "If doubt of God's Being were in reason, think you that I would not have told you how to solve it?"

39. Our Divine books are taciturn about some things because ignorance of them is a more valuable factor than knowledge would be in probationary discipline. Trial of character is largely by trial of faith. To lessen the discipline makes less of the man in its result. Therefore inspiration often does not follow the lead of our inquiries. Inspiration looks up and looks off when we look down. Then, again, the seer looks down to something of practical use or of pressing urgency, while we are looking away to the nebulæ. It says: "Why stand ye gazing up into Heaven?" Even revelations which would add something to our stock of thought are witheld, because fidelity without them would add more to our stock of character. All the answer we get is: "Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet have believed."

40. This principle explains, in part, the awful stillness of our Sacred Scriptures respecting the

dead. Suppose that all the questionings of our grief were answered. What would be the sequence? Our fancy would gather our lost ones around us in loving groups. We should live in a Christian fairyland. We should set plates for them on our dining-tables as some of the disciples of the Swedish Seer are said to do. Such a life could not be much more valuable for spiritual discipline, than the Hall of Valhalla. The fictitious element would lord it over the true. Our bereaved life would be the old life reproduced and idealized, but without mundane realities to steady it in good sense. Where would room be found for Christ? Romish history teaches us how perilous it would be for us to know much about departed saints.

41. One loss especially should we suffer if our Bible satisfied all the cravings of affliction. We should lose the tonic reaction of the *finality* which death gives to probationary experience. It is a grand thing for us, that in so many ways death fixes a limit to earthly interests and ambitions. Never a death occurs which does not cut short some lines of earthly allurement to survivors. Some one of the three Sisters of Destiny severs a strand which binds us too closely to this world. This is well. It helps to concentrate our thought on things more vital to the felicitous settlement of our destiny. We are kept from a great deal of spiritual gossip by the silence of the Bible concerning departed souls. The vacuity of our ignorance throws us back in more docile mood upon

the lessons which God has had in mind in their removal.

42. The silence of our sacred books about the interior of the spiritual world is in keeping with the methods in which the most profound teachings of the Spirit are imparted to us. These are commonly given in still ways. They come in still hours, in whispers, in hints, in queries, to which our own souls give answer. They are not heralded by blare of trumpet and beat of drum. It would not take much out of the common way to deafen our ears to their gentle tones. The staring marvel with which we should pore over a volume full of revelations about the dead would not be helpful to that calm, steady vigilance which is requisite to our discovery of the deep things of God.

43. Such a volume would not be much better than a world in which visible apparitions should flit to and fro, here and there and everywhere, interrupting us by day and scaring us by night. History abounds with these, of one sort and another. They come with just evidence enough of the fact to keep us all agog with expectations which they never realize. We have libraries, too, made up of messages from oracular spirits, who know less than they knew here. They make the world they live in insufferably repulsive by their want of dignity and good sense. Stuff more barren of useful discovery never found its way into print than that which makes up the literature of magic.

Suppose, then, that our supernatural books contained records enough of correspondence between the living and the dead to create a plausible groundwork for necromantic oracles. What reason have we to believe that we should make anything better out of them than we *have* made out of necromantic revelations which have kept the world agape through all past times? What a mass of addled theology would have accumulated by this time! Good Lord deliver us! Yet how fascinating it would be to people in affliction! Have not the best of us been sometimes tempted to seek out "the woman that had a familiar spirit"?

44. The silence of the Bible, it should be borne in mind, disturbs us chiefly under the discipline of bereavement. It should go far to quiet us, that it is a *part* of that discipline. The thing which afflicts us most severely is that our "loved and lost" have gone into a land of silence. Oblivion shuts them out from us, and us from them. The pressure of a finger on the *medulla oblongata* of the human brain produces instant loss of memory. We sometimes tremble at the thought that perhaps the removal of souls from the physical organ of thought produces the same effect on their memory. The land of silence is to them literally the land of forgetfulness. We call to them, and they do not answer. At times we cannot realize to our thought that they are not under the sod with which we have covered them, or in the tomb

where we have with our own hand shut the iron door upon them.

Yet it is better for us that we are as we are. It drives us back into the clouds and darkness where God is. It helps us to make real to our faith the resurrection of our Lord. Heaven becomes a reality to us, as it could not in any other way. We are wiser for it, if, with faces buried in a prophet's mantle, we listen only for the whispers of His love. Often, probably, our friends are removed for the very purpose of creating a void which only God can fill. Their voices are reverently silent, — perhaps consciously and intentionally silent, — that we may the better hear God speak. It is timely to such a life as this that it should be so. The renewal of earthly friendships may be most wisely reserved for a world where God so fills all thought that it can inflict no danger of moral damage.

45. Our Testaments, Old and New, are silent about some things, because their spiritual nature renders them inconceivable in our present envelopment of bodily sense. Certain spiritual disclosures would be of no more use to us than the painting of a sea-storm to the blind. We have no faculties competent to take in such revelations. We could not interpret the language in which they must be expressed if expressed at all. Doubtless many things are untold because they can be told only by symbols; and symbolic representations of them would do us more harm than good. We are

bunglers in the reading of emblematic dialects. We stumble upon bogs, and flounder into quagmires of literalism. We are apt to end with getting ourselves swamped in atheistic doubts by our struggles to make something out of them which the senses can take hold of. Nothing else is so prolific of false and imbecile beliefs, as the wilful resolve of the human mind to crowd spirit into sense. We make an "infinite deal of nothing" of it when we strive to make matter hold mind. Yet this is what we must do if we insist on the disclosure of certain spiritual truths to minds enclosed in a framework of physical faculties. Densest ignorance is better than that. Therefore ignorance it is.

46. Incidentally to the cravings of the human mind for converse with the dead, its equal craving for knowledge of the conditions of life in Heaven, renders the silence of the Bible a trial to faith. Of few things are mankind so impatient as of their enforced ignorance of another life. A living publisher has been heard to say, that almost any book with the word "Heaven" on its title-page is sure of a successful sale. So intense is human desire to explore the world beyond.

47. On the subject of the heavenly life our Scriptures are reticent, not silent. They make some things certain and others as probable as the majority of the facts on which we act in daily life. They assure us that Heaven is a place. Socrates was right in speaking of the "future *habitation* of

the soul." We cannot err essentially in conceiving of it as existing some*where*. Heaven has a theocratic government. Gradation exists in its social order. Its occupations, so far at least as men conduct them, are performed by the faculties of a celestial body. The ills of terrestrial conditions are not there. In their place is a felicitous activity which nothing else can symbolize so accurately as exultant song. The redeemed hold some sort of regal and sacerdotal rank. Christ is their imperial Chief. Christ in glorified manhood so diffuses His own presence through all the ramifications of heavenly society that He is to that world what the sun is to our solar system.

Moreover, our "place" there is to be one which has required the personal presence and ingenuity of our Lord in its preparation for our coming. He who created and adorned this world with such marvellous invention is creating and adorning another for our final abode. It will be adapted to our necessities, our character, our tastes, even to our innocent idiosyncrasies. All that is peculiar to our natural individuality will be provided for. It will be a natural continuation, in its regnant spirit, to all that is pure in our life here. The transition from this life to that will not be revolutionary. The process of the change is like a natural slumber. We shall fall asleep here and awake there.

48. These are specific and intelligible ideas.

They certainly add something to the far-off dreamy notion which some have of Heaven as only a *state* of happiness and holiness, that being all that we know about it. It is not all. Though expressed with the gorgeousness of Oriental imagery, these are solid facts. The resplendent painting of St. John's vision, or the calm, didactic assurances of our Lord, ought not to go for nothing, through fear that they may mean something. They do mean something. We abuse a revelation from Heaven if we conjure all significance out of its symbolic teachings because they *are* symbols. Human speech chooses the symbolic form because it means so much; not to throw back into a blank words that mean nothing. So far as our Occidental fancy can reproduce the Biblical painting soberly in literal conception, we are quite within the liberty of inspired thought in doing so.

49. But beyond the purpose here indicated, conjecture of the heavenly life is useless and may be worse. Reverence is apt to fare hardly at the hands of guess-work. Minds of healthy faith and Biblical training will get a loftier inspiration from the few but striking hints which the Bible gives. Specially does the Biblical assurance that the life there transcends all sensuous conceptions founded on the life here open to us an illimitable field of anticipation. It is a world of God's contriving. Therefore it is like Him in the magnitude of its resources. Its life is a hidden life with Christ in God. We wait for its disclosure till the dawn

of spiritual faculty shall enable us to take in spiritual glory.

50. Our reticent Bible gives us one grand hint of the unseen world by a pregnant *negative* declaration, "Eye hath *not* seen and ear hath *not* heard." Although these words were not aimed primarily at the heavenly life, yet they include that. The hint they give, therefore, is that the reality is so much beyond and above all sensuous discovery, that it is useless to attempt description or painting. Negative definitions and descriptions are often most dense with meaning. We are helped in the discovery of what truth is by a discovery of what it is not. That the coming life cannot be described by human tongue, nor painted by human fancy, gives us by its bare negation a thought surpassing thought. God's silence means more than most eloquent speech. It opens to us an illimitable field of anticipation. Our taciturn Scriptures invite us to wait for its disclosures till the dawn of spiritual faculty shall enable us to take in spiritual glory. We rest assured that God will speak when and where He *can* speak to the purpose.

IX.

THE THEISTIC AND THE CHRISTIAN TYPES OF RELIGIOUS LIFE.

1. Two varieties of religious experience are one in spirit, yet diverse in the habits of mind by which they disclose themselves to the consciousness of the believer. One is marked by the emphasis which it gives to the personality of God. This is the central idea around which all other ideas revolve. The fact that there is a God, a personal God, a God everywhere present, efficient in the great forces of Nature, and revealing His government in the still voices of conscience, gives character to the whole moral being of the man. He is emphatically a believer in God. He is a friend of God, a child of God. Those peculiarities of the hidden life which encircle the person of Christ are less strongly marked, if they exist at all, in the distinct consciousness of the believing spirit.

2. This theistic type of religious life gives large place to the exercise of adoration. The grace of reverence is thrifty in its growth. Prayer dwells much upon the attributes of God. Devotional feeling commonly takes the form of fear of God, trust in God, joy in God, desire after God, thank-

fulness to God, and in its ecstatic phase of conscious union with God. There is a variety of this type of piety in which the personal blessedness of God becomes a source of blessedness to the believer. A reverent sympathy with the inconceivable felicity of the Divine Being takes possession of His child. His filial heart is glad because God is full of gladness. A lowly sense of ownership springs up in relation to God. The phrase "My God" has a singular and intense significance. With no lapse into cant, he says in self-communion: "I belong to God, and God to me. I am His friend, and He is mine, by the ties of an immortal trust." This variety of godly life abounds in the saintly characters of the Old Testament. It is reproduced in later times in those godly men and women whose meditations dwell chiefly upon the examples of the more ancient Scriptures.

3. Some of our hymns of adoration addressed to the First Person of the Godhead have been hallowed by the voice and the heart of ages. To us they often appear too intense for honest worship. We resign them to professional choirs and quartets. We admire them as works of art. We are apt to think of them as the honest offerings of saints and the dying words of martyrs only.

There is a hymn which in its Latin original is probably nearly a thousand years old, beginning, "Thee we adore, Eternal God"; and another of Roman Catholic origin, "My God, how wonderful Thou art!" and a dozen versions of the twenty-

third Psalm, one of which, an ancient version by Ainsworth, was a favorite with the New England Pilgrims, and is more likely than any other to have been sung by them on that Lord's Day which they spent on Clark's Island before landing from Plymouth harbor, beginning with, "Jehovah feedeth me; I shall not lack"; and Luther's hymn, sung at his fourth centennial by forty thousand voices at Eisleben and echoed around the world, "God is my Refuge, ever near"; and the old battle-song of Gustavus Adolphus, sung by his army at Lützen, and again by the army of Oliver Cromwell at Naseby, "Fear not, O little flock, the foe!"

These exultant hymns of praise and trust and love and courage, we, in these luxurious times, may well hesitate to sing, lest we take God's name in vain by melodramatic worship. Yet this portion of our Hymnology is none too exalted to express the aspirations of a believer in whose culture this type of experience has ripened. The existence of such hymns is evidence that it has been *lived* by holy men in all ages.

4. This species of faith often gives a peculiar phase to the consciousness of sin. Sin, as reflected from this mirror, towers up into a flagrant and defiant wrong *inflicted* on God. Probably in nothing else does the human mind realize to its thought the personality of God so vividly as in suffering the mordant stings of conscience. Remorse is the revenge which angered Law takes when sin is felt to be an outrage upon a personal Deity. Law im-

personal is scarcely more to us than any other dead thing. It is God, the infinite and infinitely holy Person, against whom sin is flung in insult. That which was but error at the first deepens into crime against the rights of God. Not Law, but the Lawgiver, is the only Being in the universe with whom a guilty conscience has to do. The unanswered question of the ages, "How shall man be just with God?" looms up as the only question in the universe which needs an answer. The world's peace hangs upon it.

5. To one in whom this variety of religious culture has become a life the works of nature are profoundly significant as religious symbols. Sir Fowell Buxton says: "A man must preach very well indeed before he conveys such a lesson of the greatness of God and the unworthiness of man, as a view of the heavens discloses." Richter describes a dream in which the sleeper sees an angel "bearing a mortal man through the endless choirs and galaxies of immensity till he trembles and cries out at the overpowering spectacle of God's infinitude."

Such is the involuntary response of all thoughtful and believing minds to the resources of awakened worship which the material universe discloses. They are vocal with revelations of God. From a leaflet of a geranium to the fixed stars, and the awful possibilities of spaces which no star illumines, everything that *is*, to a vigilant soul is articulate of God. To such believing spirits there is no

cant in the "worship of Nature's Temple." It is as real as St. John's vision of the New Jerusalem.

6. The type of religious life now under review spurns as an absurdity the solicitude of a certain class of literary men and scientists to evade the recognition of a personal Creator. The effort to expurgate the very name of God from literary and scientific vocabularies is often offensive. Only one phenomenon of modern literature is more illogical. That is the sober and labored attempt of Matthew Arnold to expunge the idea of a personal Deity from the religion of the Hebrews.

Even if science must, in some connections, be reticent in its nomenclature, what has literature to do with such diplomatic evasions? Why, for instance, should Emerson, with his Platonic tastes and spiritual aspirations, find it so difficult to say outright the Holy Name? The facts in his thought are sometimes too urgent for his reserve. He must say something to indicate the unseen Power which no earnest seeker after truth can do without. Why, then, must he beat about the bush, and say "Nature," "Law," "Fate," "the Gods," "the Stars," "the Absolute," "the All," "the Oversoul," "Jupiter," "Thor," "Woden" — anything but GOD? Why should that stick in his throat? When the personal Name does force its way through the philosophic dead-lock into plain speech, why does it come as if he blushed for it?

7. It is refreshing to turn from baptized heathenism to the athletic faith of such a mind as Nie-

buhr's, to whom Nature and Nature's God were one; or to the faith, more profound than science, expressed in Coleridge's "Hymn before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouni"; or to that beautiful tribute to the unity of science and religion which Louis Agassiz paid in opening the sessions of his class in Biology on the Island of Penikese: "Young gentlemen, before we commence to look into the secrets of Nature, let us seek wisdom from the God of Nature! Let us pray!"

8. The theistic type of religious culture, in its best development, may not inaptly be denominated the religion of literature. When a religious spirit breathes at all in secular literature, why does it so commonly assume this theistic form? Is it that modern letters owe so much to those of Greece and Rome in which Christ was unknown? Account for it as we may, the fact is indisputable that the vital piety expressed or implied in the major part of our secular libraries is that which we term natural, as distinct from revealed, religion. The theology of poets, of essayists, of dramatists, of philosophers, of historians, is for the most part natural as distinguished from Christian theology.

9. Wordsworth's "Excursion," for example, is one of the most religious poems in the language. But its religious thought is derived chiefly from the Book of Nature, not from the Christian Scriptures. Emerson once said that Wordsworth's "Ode to Immortality" is the most decisive argument for the truth of that doctrine extant in our literature.

Yet not a line of it is necessarily and directly attributable to the Bible. Bryant's "Thanatopsis" has been characterized as being rather a heathen than a Christian poem. The theology of Shakespeare, though expressed as he could not have expressed it but for the atmosphere of Christian culture in which his mind was formed, yet is inspired by the material world and the intuitions of conscience more distinctly than by the Christian revelation. Spenser's "Fairy Queen" and Milton's "Paradise Lost" are the only two poems of equal eminence in our language, which are constructed, warp and woof, on Christian ideas, and with direct use of Biblical materials.

Although it is true that English Literature, as a whole, is more thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the Bible than any other now existing, yet the facts above named indicate the limited extent to which our religion as a spiritual life in the soul of the individual has taken possession of the leading minds of those who have made our literature what it is. Their faith in Christianity has been largely nominal. It has been belief as distinct from faith.

10. More generally than we should be glad to find it, this religion of Nature is the variety of religious life expressed by American statesmen. What has their confession of faith often given to the world more positive than that of the best heathen philosophers? Thomas Jefferson professed in private his sympathy with the liturgic service of the Church of England. But so far as

an observer of his life could have discovered, his personal faith, that which represented his mental history, was scarcely more than that of Cicero. The same is true of many of his associates in the first American Congress. Benjamin Franklin, though trained in the ancient faith of New England, when he came at the last to declare his mature opinions, had not so much to declare which was indicative of a spiritual life as Plato had.

American statesmen sometimes betray a timidity, unworthy of their ancestry, in their straining to avoid religious cant. This infirmity has rendered their religious utterances on the approach of death jejune and commonplace. Their guarded words in some cases have been as bare of distinctively Christian aspirations as the symbolic inscriptions on the pyramids. The dying words of one of the most illustrious of them amount to scarcely more than this — that, all things considered, Christianity is a credible system of belief, and on the whole the Bible is a good book. There is one thing more discreditable to a man of Christian birth than the cant of Christianity; it is the cant of heathenism.

11. A striking illustration of the tendency of a theistic religion to lapse into a nominal belief is found in the life of one of the statesman of England in the last generation. He was contemporary with the Rev. William Jay of Bath. Mr. Jay was one of the most intelligible preachers of

his times. Unlettered hearers listened to him in silent crowds. Children easily took in his meaning. He possessed that first and best sign of a great preacher, that men were moved by his discourses without distinction of intellectual or of social class.

Yet when "the great commoner" heard one of Mr. Jay's plain sermons addressed to spiritual believers, he said at the close of the services, that he had not received one definite idea of the preacher's meaning. Such a result might be due to defects in the discourse of many another preacher, but not to defects in that of Mr. Jay. What, then, was the root of the difficulty? It was simply that the mental habits of the statesman were so void of the ideas peculiar to a spiritual Christianity that he could not interpret the dialect in which they were uttered. It was a strange tongue to him, because the ideas which it carried were strange to his experience. He had never *lived* anything which lifted his mind to their level.

12. The theistic variety of religious experience when it is a real life in a believing soul may as honestly express a regenerate state as the more characteristic life of a Christian believer. It may have been "saving faith" to many a heathen inquirer after truth. To Marcus Aurelius it may have been such. The practicability of salvation through this imperfect knowledge of the true God is distinctly recognized by St. Paul. "Eternal Power and Godhead" are the things which may be

"clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." God may have disclosed Himself thus, to how many we cannot know. They saw more, and saw more clearly it may be, than we have been wont to give credit for to the system of things under which they lived. What they saw was golden truth, so far as it went. It may have been the motor to a penitent and believing life.

We may therefore find Socrates in rank with Christian martyrs. The "Meditations" of Aurelius are a phenomenon most significant and hopeful respecting the probable range of the human mind and the efficiency of the human conscience in the discovery of the most necessary ideas without the aid of a revelation. It should not astonish us if we see many from the West and from the East in the kingdom from which its children have been cast out.

13. In modern Christian communities are found many good men who are not churchmen. One who is predisposed to judge men generously would fain discover in many such men the unconscious disciples of Christ. They live in a Christian twilight. Prejudices often curtail the volume of their faith. Their sacred books are abridged. They may see as cross-eyed men see, not in perfect perspective. As they see, so they believe often in fragments. But cross-eyed men do see something. An abridged Bible may contain much saving truth. Isaac Taylor has observed that if the entire Scriptures were blotted out from the literatures of the

world except the briefest of St. Paul's Epistles, the residuum of Christian truth would be sufficient to save the world. One truth, living as a faith, in the character of one believer carries with it a thousand corollaries.

So in the case of infirm believers, the Spirit of God may use their contracted and tangled faith in a fragmentary revelation to their eternal life. In His magnanimous vision of their character they may be devout men, worshippers in secret of One who sees in secret. Their feeble cousciousness of a living God may one day grow into an overpowering consciousness of a living Christ. The kingdom of Heaven is as a grain of mustard seed.

14. Unconscious conversion is probably a more common occurrence in the economy of grace than we think. The Holy Spirit achieves many secret conquests. He employs all varieties of method and all proportions and some disproportions of truth to meet all diversities of condition. As men judge, He saves at great risks. The ways to Heaven are many, not identical, but convergent.

15. Opposite, yet not contrary to the variety of religious life described in the foregoing pages, is another which is illustrated in the large majority of believers. It differs from the theistic type of piety in the fact that the central and regnant idea around which it circles is Christ. Not the idea of God in the undivided unity of His being, but the idea of God incarnate in the person of His Son,

gives character to the whole round of the believer's faith. This is made familiar to us by the large majority of Christian biographies. The inner life which they portray is Christian as distinct from theistic. It is the Christian religion of the New Testament, not the natural religion of the Old.

16. This emphatically Christian type of piety is marked in its most mature examples by an intensity all its own. Christian memoirs abound with narratives in which the person and the atoning work of Christ appear to have been absolutely regnant in the believer's religious life. Often on the approach of death the very name of Jesus has had power to call back the dying memory from the land of shadows. An example of this was witnessed in the extreme old age of one of our fathers in the ministry, recently deceased. When his memory had become infirm, he used at times to imagine in social prayer that he was conversing with friends long ago departed, and whom he was soon to follow.

On one such occasion, he talked with a ministerial brother whose death had greatly afflicted him. When his mind righted itself, he prayed: "O Lord, my memory is gone, but Thou knowest that I have not forgotten Jesus Christ."

17. The soul's immortality has no more impressive proof than such a phenomenon as this. What is that something on which a *name* can be so indestructibly engraved that it cannot die? Agnostic science is very wise, but what cerebral convo-

lutions can explain this? What impersonal psychic force achieves the mystery?

18. In countries in which religious expression is more demonstrative than in ours, this type of piety is found beautifully wrought into social usages. "The Lord is risen" was the morning salutation of the early Christians. The Waldenses used to accompany their good wishes of the morning and evening with a formula which recognized the intercession of our Lord. "In His Name," they said. That was also their password by which they distinguished friend from foe when they held their faith at the risk of their life. In some districts of the Tyrolese Alps, friends meeting in the mountain highways used to salute each other thus: "Praised be the Lord Christ," says the elder, and "Forever more, Amen!" the younger responded. The national faith must have had somewhere in the past a most intense vitality to have given birth to such social customs.

19. Another feature of this variety of Christian living is its intense individuality. No other variety equals it in singleness of experience. That is a great revolution which comes into a believer's consciousness when his faith realizes to him the personal love of Christ to him as an individual. Christ as a world's redeemer, and Christ as the redeemer of the individual, are very distinct. Salvation as a corporate gift, or an organic arrangement for the race, and salvation as a blessing to the individual believer, are widely different things.

The one may live in his belief many years before the other becomes a reality to his faith.

Yet it is a very simple thing when we put our minds to the root of the matter. The entire work of Christ for man is an individual concern. We sin as individuals. We are regenerated as individuals. We appropriate his atoning sacrifice as individuals. We shall stand one day at His tribunal of judgment as individuals. In this singleness of relationship between the individual spirit and our Lord is laid the foundation of the entire work. On this rests every hope. The whole wealth of our Redeemer's love flows out to each and every *one*, as if he were the only sacred being in the universe. He does not come into His full heirship with Christ, as a redeemed being, until those words of St. Paul become an overwhelming reality to Him: "Who loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*."

20. In the individual life this experience is apt to disclose itself first as a sequence to an impassioned sense of sin. Ignoring sin, all religion is a by-play to real life. To the purpose of such a life as man lives here, it means nothing, does nothing, promises nothing, is nothing. But when the consciousness of sin takes such possession of a man's inner being that he feels it to be the one central fact of his moral history, then he begins to feel as profoundly his need of Christ. From this discovery the step is short and quick to that of the reality of Christ. It is human nature to be-

lieve vehemently in the thing we need. We seldom believe in Christ as a reality till we first find Him as a necessity. Other and finer relations to Him disclose themselves at a later stage of spiritual growth, but the initial discovery is that of a desperate necessity. We find Christ in the deep religious sense of faith, because we must find Him.

John Foster uttered the experience of the vast majority of believers: "The Gospel to me is not a matter of speculation, but of necessity. I come to Jesus because I *need* pardon." So say we all in those hours of spiritual discovery in which our vision is most keen and our assimilation of truth is most active. Some can find rest from the tempestuous agitations of an angered conscience, and others from the dull dead ache of remorse, in no other way. The dull, theistic type of religious faith is not enough for such quickened believers. They must find God in Christ.

21. Real life sometimes discloses a fearful peculiarity in that experience in which the consciousness of sin is *not* relieved by a spiritual discovery of Christ. It is that the consciously guilty one cannot pray. He appears to himself so remote from God in moral sympathy that prayer is mockery. Cowper once described this in his own diseased vagaries, as "a remoteness compared with which the distance from East to West is vicinity, is cohesion." Thrust out like Cain from the presence of the Lord, a sinner feels that like the first murderer he is an accursed and branded being.

The universe must undergo some catastrophic revolution before prayer from his lips can traverse the infinite spaces which separate him from the place hallowed by God's dwelling. "Do not name prayer to me," said Voltaire in his last hours, as he is reported by his Christian nurse.

22. Poets, with no intent to illustrate a Biblical truth, have illustrated this truth of the contradiction between prayer and the consciousness of sin unrelieved by the discovery of Christ. Thus Shakespeare pictures the remorse of Macbeth when the blood-stains on his hands bring his guilt home to him. He cannot pray. He overhears the young sons of the murdered prince waking from their troubled sleep to say their prayers, and he says: —

> "Listening . . . I could not say 'Amen'
> When they did say 'God bless us!'
> Wherefore could I not pronounce 'Amen'?
> I had most need of blessing, yet 'Amen'
> Stuck in my throat."

This is human nature when buffeting the infuriated billows of remorse without Christ. The most genuine literature of the world places a guilty man in the same dread extremity in which the Bible places him. Dramatic genius paints it as the pulpit paints it. To a guilty being aroused to an honest disclosure of himself, the thought of God is freighted with secret revenges, which nothing silences but a corresponding disclosure of Christ. Sometimes that discovery comes as a

surprise: it did so to David Brainerd. In other cases it is the fruit of prolonged discipline: it was such to Richard Baxter. But in both it is one thing — a sense of the reality of Christ as God — working out a redemption from sin which is possible in no other way.

23. Another peculiarity of this phase of religious life is that when we grasp the *fact* of Christ as a reality in our moral destiny, we have no desire to philosophize about it. That is to say, a philosophy of the atonement is not a necessity to our mental repose. The contradiction of trinity in unity in the ontology of Divine Being does not disturb us. Nor does the ulterior mystery of atonement, as related to the moral government of God, clamor for a clearance. Under the intolerable weight of guilt we have no heart for such researches. They may come to us at a later stage of moral quietude, but for the time being we do not care for them. Men struggling for a necessity do not think beyond the necessity. A swimmer striking out for dear life does not care for more than life. So in that exigency of an awakened spirit in which we appropriate Christ by faith, philosophical speculations find no purpose. We hang on the edge of suspended fate. We want a Redeemer who is God-Man; but to know what is the mysterious bond between them would be rather a hindrance than a help. That wisdom is not timely, though from the lips of angels.

24. It deserves note also that the conscious pos-

session of Christ as a personal Saviour brings the believing spirit into closer proximity to a personal God than it seems reverent to approach when all that we know of Him is His unveiled Deity.

The confessions of a pastor's note-book often give illustrations of this. A pastor in Boston once mentioned to me an inquirer in his own parish whose awe at the ineffable majesty of God was so profound that he had no consciousness of the filial relationship between God and himself. The possibility of it was a discovery. He might fear God, revere God, repent towards God, trust God, adore God, obey God; but he said: "Do you mean to say that I am free to *love* God as I do a personal friend?"

25. Overpowering awe at the majesty and holiness of God is not limited to minds of exceptional structure. This is evident from the fact that it finds so frequent and intense expression in our Hymnology. One recalls at random such lines as the following; viz.: —

"Great God, and wilt thou condescend
To cast a look below?"

"And *can* this mighty King
Of glory condescend?"

"My God! O could I make the claim,
My Father and my Friend!"

"Father! *if* I may call Thee so."

In such strains of trembling reverence the Church has for ages been wont to sing that mood of devotional feeling in which the remoteness of

a holy God from a guilty man burdens the spirit. But that mood gives way to a sense of proximity and of friendship when God is discovered as a reality in the person of our Lord. Christian Hymnology in every language overflows with hymns of loving adoration of Christ.

26. An affecting illustration of the unsatisfied craving of a believing heart for union with God is on record in the Memoirs of Dr. Chalmers. The strength of his character gives it a place among the few records of Christian experience which the Church will not "willingly let die."

Under one date he writes in a diary kept for his own eye alone: "March 4. Cannot say much of my walk with God." Again he says, "March 5. Cannot yet record a close walk with God." Then, "March 7. Cannot yet speak of any walk with God." And again, "March 8. Not yet! Not yet! O God, help me!" And once more, "March 9. Not yet! O my God, keep me humble!" At last he records in one of those silent communings with himself and God, these words: "Will not a quiet confidence in *Christ* bring it about?" The words of this confession of a good, great man are few, and of the more worth for being few. A volume of unwritten biography lies behind them. Here is a godly man who, after years of Christian discipline, labors day after day under the same sense of the infinite recoil of the sensibilities of God from human guilt which is felt by the humblest believer. At the very time when Europe and America were ringing

with admiration of his genius, and when vast assemblies crowded the largest church in Scotland, and extended from the windows and doors across the street, to catch the words that fell from his lips, this struggle of his inner life was going on in secret. None but himself and God knew it. He could find God in the walk of friend with Friend, only as the rest of us do, by "a quiet confidence in Christ."

27. A remarkable difference exists between the Protestant and the Romish faith in their impression upon religious life, of the person of the Redeemer. Protestant faith realizes to the believer's thought a living Christ; Romish faith, a dead Christ. The living link between power and helplessness to which a man clings in the emergency of sin is intercession. That the Romish theology relegates to created beings. Our Protestant theology brings the penitent soul to the very God in the person of our Lord.

With a great sense of need have we obtained our Protestant freedom in this thing. Modern thought has made it in theory so trite that we do not appreciate the magnitude of it till some emergency discovers to us what our plight would be without it. What would our practical sense of deliverance from sin be, if we had none greater or better than saints, living or dead, to indorse our prayers for it? Reverse the grooves of our supplications, so that they shall ascend not to the living and recreant Christ, but to St. Dominic or St. Bernard, and how much

of the peace of God could we ever get from them? Materialize our mental image of our Lord to the drooping form in Rubens's "Descent from the Cross" or to the agonized visage of Guido's "Ecce Homo"; how could we bear the revulsion which would come upon our present conception of Him? Shall we not need something other than these before our dying eyes?

28. The Christian type of religious life furnishes an antidote to another stupendous error in human conceptions of God. Left to its own imaginings the human mind conceives of the life of God as an eternal repose. In the far, the long withdrawing recesses of primeval distance, somewhere in the universe, immeasurably remote from human wants and sympathies — God *is*. That is all that we know of Him. So dreams our thought of God without the help of an incarnation. Buddha has done for us the best that man can do to formulate to human thought the life of God, without a knowledge of Christ.

Our Lord, on the other hand, has revealed God as the most intensely and benevolently active Being in the universe. We do not know that Christ ever spent an idle hour. Who believes that He ever felt the necessity of "killing time"? Enterprise and self-sacrifice follow as inevitable corollaries from the consciousness of a living Christ in the believer's thought. We should have reason to distrust the history of Christianity if it had not produced such men as St. Paul, Francis Xavier,

Count Zinzendorf, and Henry Martyn. Such men are the direct product of the idea of Christ as a revelation of the life of God.

29. The fact deserves emphatic mention that this variety of experience which we term Christian as distinct from Theistic has impressed itself on real life more vividly than any other which has wrought itself, on any larger scale, into human history.

For proof of this we must turn again to the hymns of the Church. That which the Church loves most profoundly she sings most cordially. Of all her hymns, the choicest and dearest to Christian hearts in all ages have been those consecrated to the worship of the living Christ. Some of them are older than any living language. The earliest known Greek poem on a sacred theme is a song of "Praise to Christ the Redeemer."

This class of Christian hymns were the favorite songs of the early Christian homes. They have been sung at marriage-feasts, over the cradles of new-born children, at morning and evening and noontide prayers. They have been the most precious burial-hymns chanted beside the graves of saints. They have been the most inspiring battle-songs of Christian armies. In hours of victory they have been the thanksgiving alike of the living and the dying. In civil wars, dying Christians of both armies, the victors and the vanquished, have joined their feeble voices in them on the field. This occurred on the field of Shiloh.

Hymns of this class have been the summons of great awakenings and reformations. Luther made Europe ring with new hymns in praise of God in Christ. The Moravian Brethren of Germany, and the Methodists of England, called back in the same way a decadent Church.

Above all others, these have been the chosen hymns of martyrs. They have been sung in low tones, by hunted worshippers in dens and caves, and in the intervals of torture on the rack. The Albigensian Christians sang them while casting themselves into the flames kindled by Simon de Montfort. The Waldenses sung them in the fastness of the Maritime Alps, when they were compelled to smother their voices lest they should be heard by armed men in ambush. Margaret Wilson sung fragments of them when tied by the minions of Claverhouse to the stake in Solway Frith. Women of gentle culture in the Netherlands who were buried alive sung snatches of them while the guards of "Alva the Butcher" were shovelling the earth in upon their living faces.

30. Such is the volume of holy song which has borne down through the ages the very life of souls in adoration of Christ as God. Yet Matthew Arnold would have us believe that our faith in any personal God at all "cannot be verified!" Our own Scriptures even do not teach it! What living thing under the whole heavens, then, can "be verified"? That men and women and children have lived this faith, singing it through cen-

turies of suffering for it unto death, is an argument in proof of it, the same in kind and tenfold in force, with that which Emerson ascribes to Wordsworth's "Ode on Immortality" in proof of that doctrine.

31. An interesting incident to the history of the two varieties of religious life illustrated in the foregoing pages is the fact that they have impressed themselves upon the two grandest and most beautiful *festival* days which the world has known, — the Thanksgiving Day of New England and the English Christmas. Our fathers of the exodus from England likened themselves to the people of the more ancient exodus of Egypt. Though by no means indifferent to the institutions of the New Testament, yet they were in many things men of the older dispensation. The Mosaic Sabbath was their ideal of holy time. The Decalogue was their code of private morals. The abhorrence with which they recoiled from Romish festivals swept away with them the English Christmas. It was quite in the course of Nature that the only festival which they originated which has become national, should be in adoration of the Creator, the Protector, the Father, the God of the seed-time and the harvest, rather than of Christ the Redeemer. It was in keeping with their departure from the traditions of the Mother Church in other things.

The Church of England, on the other hand, honored some of those traditions to her own hurt. But as an incident to her conservatism, she saved

to the whole English-speaking world the festival commemorative of the risen and ascended Christ. Thus the two great types of individual religious life which are natural to Christian believers, we find expressed in the two festivals which bid fair to become national in our country's history.

32. Of the two varieties of Christian experience here developed, it may seem superfluous to inquire which is the superior. Each is the superior under its own conditions. Each is natural to the conditions which produce it. Neither is exclusive of the other. The possible and the actual range of Christian living are very expansive. Like the love of Christ, they have height and depth and length and breadth. The Divine toleration of diversities is very generous. God looks magnanimously upon varieties of temperament and early training and inherited bias and outward circumstance. If a man of meditative temperament inclines to one type, and a man of more demonstrative nature to another, God is not hypercritical in judging the one by the other's tastes. Dwellers in the mountains or on the sea may find in their surroundings food for one kind of religious growth, and inhabitants of cities who never see a horizon may experience more facile development in another kind. They whose education has made much of the Old Testament may expand in one way; they whose training has had closer affinity with the New Testament may develop in another. Divine grace studies the history of the individual·

33. Nature often is made tributary to grace through the laws of *heredity* in ways which are intricate and wonderful. Here is a child born with a healthy physical inheritance, and especially with a dense and evenly balanced brain. He is therefore saved by ante-natal protection from the temptations and moral defeats which come from distempered nerves and tainted blood. Such a child, trained in the seclusion of a Christian home, is preserved by his very ignorance from many varieties of sin. He may, therefore, *grow* into "a state of grace" without knowing it. God the Creator, the Father, the Friend, may tacitly take the place of earthly father and mother in his loving reverence, and he may never know the time of the substitution. He may honestly say: "It was always thus with me." The moral horologe, in such a case, has no dial-plate. Christ may not become more than a historic fact to him till riper years and severer trials and the craft of Satan make *sin* more potentially real to him, and drive him to the great discovery. He finds out the reality of Christ, not till he feels his own need of Christ.

34. Yet the whole inner spirit of these varieties of Christian living is one. They *are* varieties, not contraries. Each is the complement of the other. In a rounded and finished character both will appear in living beauty.

A resident of the city of Bath, England, a contemporary with the Rev. William Jay, once compared

his preaching with that of a Unitarian preacher of the same city. He said that the one preached Christ as if there were no God, and the other preached God as if there were no Christ. No such contradiction appears in the characters of those formed by a full, balanced faith. In such characters both these ideas are living forces. They work in harmony.

35. In personal Christian growth we often observe a progress from the one to the other of these types of piety corresponding to that from the Old Testament to the New. Such progress indicates the tendency of character to grow by evolution rather than by revolution. Gradual increments are Nature's choice. Individuals may have their "fulness of time" as the world's history has had. It may in both be marked by an "advent of Christ." God builds characters or stars in ways manifold.

X.

THE FUTURE OF CHRISTIANITY.

1. The conversion of the world to Christ is a prophecy and an enterprise. We are prone to rest in the prophecy and to lag in the enterprise. At present it languishes, not for the want of resources, not for the want of faith in the issue, but for the want of *character*, consecrated and concentrated in its achievement. It needs to be prosecuted with an intensity of desire and will which shall have the force of a passion. The object is a conquest, the grandest that is known to either history or prophecy. It must be achieved, if at all, by the passion of conquest. It requires a force of human will, like that which created Mohammedanism.

2. Is the passion of conquest impossible in the execution of a spiritual enterprise? For answer, be it observed that the love of science has sometimes assumed this form and degree of heroism. De Quincey mentions a French physician who, in devotion to medical science, inoculated himself with the virus of a malignant cancer. Another did the same with the venom of hydrophobia before Pasteur was known. A third committed suicide

with the fumes of burning charcoal, that he might record, for the benefit of his profession, the pulse of slowly approaching death by that means. A fourth lowered himself into the crater of Vesuvius, to the depth never before touched by human foot, that he might give to science memoranda of dying sensations which could be obtained in no other way. There is but one object which deserves self-sacrifice so heroic. It is that, or something akin to that, for which our Lord laid down His life. Is not the passion of Christian sacrifice equal to that of scientific research?

3. A hopeful outlook upon the future of Christianity is suggested by the fact that the principle of sympathy is more potent for good than for evil. Right is auxiliary to every other right. Wrong eventually wars with every other wrong. Good tends to union; evil to segregation. Selfishness, full-grown, is absolute isolation. The selfishness of evil, therefore, defeats itself. A world in which sin is regnant has only to be let alone to insure its ruin by internal convulsions. On the contrary, a body like the Church of Christ carries in its constitution the elements of conquest, through sympathy in feeling and concert in action.

4. The radical conditions of the problem disclose another ground of hope in the fact that evil in this world exists under a destiny of reaction, which is fatal to its perpetuity. In many forms even its longevity yields to reactions, by which it destroys itself. In the form of bad governments evil tends

to extremes, which wear out the patience even of a bad world. Revolutions follow, which tear up society by the roots. Men who initiate the corrupt and the false in government, and build institutions of falsehood and corruption in their pride of success, grow weary of their own work. They pull down in rage what they built up in hope. Evil thus reacts at maturity upon the promise of its infancy. The major part of political history is made up of these retributive reactions, in which wrong dies by its own hand.

In the destiny of false religions the same law holds good. Superstitions die suicidally. Even a bad conscience revolts from its own excesses. Heathen religions are not destroyed by the philosophies which grow up by their side. They die of their own corruptions. Christianity achieves its most brilliant successes by taking possession of the vacancies which such destructions leave behind them.

5. Through its whole history the Christian religion has developed supreme affinities for best things. For the noblest culture, for purest morals, for magnificent literatures, for most finished civilizations, for most energetic national temperaments, for most enterprising races, for the most virile and progressive stock of mind, it has manifested irresistible sympathies. It goes wherever it can find these superlative growths of human nature. Where it cannot find them, it creates them. Judging its future by its past, no other system of human

thought has so splendid a destiny. It is the only system which possesses undying youth.

6. The successes of Christianity are not to be measured by the increase of the Church alone. It has secondary purposes which yet enter into its predestined conquests. One of these is to act as a detective and remonstrant force in human society. "I bear *witness* to the truth." It has come into the world as a test of character. Its mission in part is to disclose evil which it does not rectify, and to protest against corruptions which it does not purify. For the vindication of the government of God, evil is not to go to its own place till it is *found out.* It must know itself, and be known to an observant universe, by the force of contrasts. This world is a spectacle to other worlds.

7. Illustrations of this detective principle are witnessed when and where Christian character is most positive. Wicked men become eminently wicked when and where good men are eminently good. Degree matches degree. The secret depths of depravity are unveiled. Sin acts itself out in preparation for judgment upon its malign maturity. In the natural course of events, we should expect the final triumphs of Christianity to succeed conflicts with the matured and concentrated forces of depravity. The Gog and the Magog of prophecy have a foundation in the nature of the things concerned.

8. A fact often overlooked in our prognostications of the conversion of the world is the im-

mensely augmented vitality of modern nations, and of races of modern birth, as compared with those of earlier ages. From antediluvian times downward, the tendency of things has been to pack human life more and more densely with eventful history. Human character has been broadened and deepened. The resources of race have multiplied. Man is another being now than he was in Syria or Arabia when the race was young. There is more of him in the aggregate; not in numbers only, but in virility of character. He leaves behind him when he dies a more magnificent past than he inherited at his birth.

9. National destinies also develop more rapidly, and mature with more weight of history. The same underlying causes which have made armies colossal in size, and almost resistless in the enginery of war, tend also to make the development of moral forces more rapid, and to hasten on ultimate events. A year now is equivalent to a decade in the time of Charlemagne. The face of the world and of the Church to-day has the look of being in the final ages of time. Men now living have the promise of witnessing an advance toward the end of the present economy unequalled by the progress of any human lifetime of the past.

10. It is misleading, therefore, to conceive of the conversion of the world as a remote event. Prophecy declares what history hints at, that the closing stages of that work will be developed with unprecedented rapidity. History will grow and

mass itself in great events with reduplicated momentum.

11. It appears probable that in the future progress of the Christian faith large expansion is to take place in the *breadth* of Christian mind. A profound principle of proportion in character was announced in the declaration of our Lord: "There hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist; nevertheless, he that is least in the kingdom of Heaven is greater than he." The tendency of Christian ideas is to mental growth. The mind *must* expand which takes them in with cordial sympathy. The conversion of Saul of Tarsus wrought in him an intellectual revolution.

12. The working of this principle seems likely to be redoubled in creative force, by the multiplying of nationalities and races under the sway of Christian thought. The Church of the future cannot be provincial in character any more than in locality. That enrichment of life-blood which springs from the intermingling of races must become tributary to the ultimate types of Christianity. This is one of the ways in which is to be developed the tendency of Christianity to take possession of best things.

13. The work of the world's conversion suffers for the want of that prestige which in any great enterprise of a spiritual nature comes only from rapidity of progress. When such an enterprise lags, something more than time is lost. Imperativeness of moral impression is lost. The respect

which is felt for congruity of the work with the spirit of its executives is lost. The reduplication of force which springs from momentum is lost. Natural laws are not suspended in the working of Divine power.

14. Lord Collingwood of the English navy used to teach his gunners that if they could deliver three broadsides in five minutes, no enemy could stand before them. The impression on the enemy's *morale* would double the force of the assault. His gunners learned to do it in three minutes and a half. A similar principle holds good in moral warfare. Motion itself is force; speed is force reduplicated. One brief period of rapid conquest in the progress of Christianity would concentrate the mind of the world upon it as the work of God. For moral impression, it would be worth twice that of the same amount of gain extended over twice the length of time. And in such an enterprise, moral impression is the germ of ultimate success.

15. The composite structure of the Anglo-American stock of mind marks it as that from which the most prolific resources of power are to come for the work of the world's salvation. Great Britain and America are peopled by races more diverse, and in some respects more antagonistic, than are found in any other portion of the world. Such opposites blended into one usually crystallize into elect nations. From such nations spring elect families and individuals. These develop into

chosen leaders and foreseeing pioneers. It is not without significance to the future of the Christian Church that the English language already sways one-quarter of the world, and much more than that proportion of the thinking power of the world. Back of that fact lie immense forces of *race* which are committed to the ultimate ascendency of Christianity.

16. The Church will not attain to her millennial expansion till we give freer play, in our plans and expectations, to the laws of hereditary grace. There is an extreme of individualism in the theory of conversion entertained by many, which virtually ignores those laws. Yet nothing is more obvious in the Scriptural theory of Church extension as displayed in Scriptural history. Our faith in them should lead us to work in line with them. We should work expectantly. We should look to find a feeder to the growth of the Church in the natural outflow of ancestral piety in the persons of Christian children to the remotest generation. Our colonial fathers and mothers of New England were accustomed to pray for the conversion of their posterity to the end of time. Theirs was a philosophical as well as a far-sighted faith.

17. The law of hereditary grace is a magnificent example of the "conservation of forces." No other is so sublime or so beneficent. Under its operation every new-born child of Christian parents enters on existence under protective conditions. In the natural order of things, his salvation should

be treated as a thing of course. A fearful revulsion and contradiction of Divine law takes place if he is not saved. In God's plan of procedure, the growth of the Church is ordained mainly by natural increase under Christian parentage. Here, as elsewhere, grace works in the groove of Nature. It is not that holiness is inherited; no form of character is so. But the elements are inherited in which, as in its natural soil, holiness germinates. A momentum towards right is thus created, which it requires an incalculable force of evil to overpower. Plant an acorn anywhere and anyhow in good soil, and it will grow upward, not downward. By a law of its being, its tiny sprout will seek the sun. So a child set in the groundwork of a Christian family, and nurtured in its bland and pure atmosphere, should, by the very conditions of his existence, grow up towards God and Heaven. His failure to do so is a moral catastrophe. It is against Nature.

18. To specify but one of the instrumentalities by which the grace of God reaches the heart of a Christian child through the channel of his parentage, look at the moral power of the family altar. Nothing else in a Christian home lives in memory with such regenerating force as that which inheres in a father's or a mother's prayers. One such child of prayer, when an old man near the time of his translation, recorded his own experience in a communication to a friend, as follows: —

"I remember our family prayers in my childhood

if they were voices from Heaven. I owe my ılvation to them. The scene can never fade from my mind. The room in which we knelt, the light of the setting sun, which often streamed in through the western window, the sweet voice of my mother in the hymns we sang, the low and loving tones in which my father used to plead with God for us, are as fresh in my recollection to-day as they were sixty years ago. No other scene this side of Heaven is so hallowed in my thoughts. It all came back to me at the only time in my life at which I strayed into a theatre. It made the hour one of misery to me. As a power of restraint to keep a young man from evil ways, give me first and above all others of human origin the memory of family prayers."

19. If the natural law of increase in the line of Christian families should come under the power of the grace of God, without exceptions or intermissions, how long would it be before the present relative *proportions* of the Church and the world would be reversed? The problem is susceptible of a mathematical solution. The tendency of religion in a family is to prolong its line; that of irreligion, to shorten the line. Depraved families have brief histories. Ancestral virtue has a long life. A hint of this contrast in the destiny of families is expressed in the third commandment of the Decalogue. Let it be as definitely wrought into the expectant faith of believers in the conversion of the world, and that event would soon be more than prophecy.

20. The law of hereditary grace should affect the methods of Christian usefulness in labors for the conversion of children and youth. Those of godly parentage should not be taught the necessity of a convulsive change in regeneration Such a change in a Christian child is unnatural. It is not the common law of Christian life. The ideal of that which was to them an impossible change of character has doomed many such children to a period of unspoken despair. Despair aggravates sin by developing the consciousness of sin. Remorse without hope develops guilt as nothing else can. Such children often become unconscious fatalists in all that concerns their own salvation.

21. The law of hereditary grace suffers an occasional intermission. Real life sometimes discloses a suspension of this law in the descent of moral tendency from parent to child. One, even two generations may be omitted in the inheritance of the blessing, and it will reappear in the generations following. King Hezekiah, of the line of Jewish monarchs, was a devout man. Manasseh, his son, and Amon, his grandson, were exceptionally depraved. Men must be so who resist innate tendencies to virtue. But in Josiah, the great-grandson of Hezekiah, the line of godly graces reappeared. The unwritten history of Christian families often discovers the same phenomena of intermission and resumption of the law of gracious inheritance. Through the long run of generations, the law develops a wonderful tenacity of life.

22. The disastrous consequences of a neglect of the laws of heredity in our estimate of the moral conditions of Christian children had a striking illustration many years ago, in the case of a youth who afterwards became the Governor of one of the Middle States of this country. He had been born and nurtured in a family of Scotch-Presbyterian descent. At about the age of fifteen years he sought the advice of his pastor respecting a profession of religion by communion with the Church. His yet infantile faith was tested by the standard given in "Edwards on the Religious Affections." He was asked if he had felt this and felt that revolutionary change in his mental exercises. Had he made new discoveries of God? Was he overwhelmed by his conciousness of guilt? Did he feel that he deserved to be damned for his sins? Did he so submit his destiny to the will of God that he was willing to be damned if God had so decreed? He knew nothing of all that in his own experience. Its very dialect was a strange tongue. He only knew that he loved Christ, and it seemed to him that he had always done so.

It was probably a case of unconscious regeneration, perhaps in infancy. But he was told to wait till he was old enough to experience a change of heart, and to know it. When it came, it would be indicated by signs which could not be mistaken. The consequence was humiliating to the religious enlightenment of the age. With what was to him an impossible ideal of conversion before him, he

entered on active life with no faith in himself as a child of God. Years followed years of prayerless life. Conscience suffered from a religion of despair. It was not till fifty years had rolled by that he again summoned courage to seek admission to the Church. Half a century of Christian peace and usefulness was sacrificed by the want of faith in God's working under the laws of Christian parentage.

23. It should stimulate our confidence in the future of the Christian religion to contemplate the appalling results which must follow the failure of such a faith to realize the promise of its triumph. The downfall of such a system of beliefs would plunge the thinking portion of mankind into an abyss below the lowest ever conceived of by Roman pessimism when the old mythologies expired. The gloom of universal incertitude would be inevitable. "Deeper than ever plummet sounded" is the ocean of despair which would then roll over the nations. The corollary would be indisputable that, if such a faith cannot commend itself to human reason as true, then nothing is true but the theorems of Euclid. Annihilation would be the only possibility in human destiny which could balance the fact of death. Immortality, if credited, would become a doom. Insanity and suicide would grow with the growth of liberal culture. Such is the forecast of the world's destiny which men of agnostic negations offer as a substitute for the Christian promise of redemption.

24. It is well known that many of the most thoughtful minds in Christendom believe that the final conflict between good and evil in this world will be raged between Christianity in its maturest type and the extreme of unbelief represented by avowed and cultivated Atheism. It is to be a war of giants. It will not be provincial in its range. Nor will it be limited, as the moral conflicts of the past have been, to a few representative leaders of Christian sects, and a few champions of the extreme and erratic ideas of unbelief. It will be like the War of the Rebellion in America — a conflict of opposing civilizations. Nations will be its armies. The world will be the battle-ground, and there will be no lookers-on.

Such is the conception of the closing age of this world's history, of which many Christian minds find symbolic hints in Biblical prophecy. Philosophic thinkers discern signs of colossal preparations for it in the present state of the world and the drift of history.

25. One of the tokens of the spirit of progress with which Christianity has leavened human society is witnessed in the alleviation of the rancor which once infected religious controversy.

One cannot but contrast hopefully the genial temper of modern religious debate with that which history pictures to our fancy of the controversies among the early Protestant reformers. Luther called a brother monk a "beast," and another a "hog." Even if it was true, it was not exactly

fraternal. Calvin denounces a brother Protestant as a "dog," and Servetus he branded as a "viper." As to the honorary titles of "devil," "fiend," "Antichrist," they were like household words. They were bandied about like shuttlecocks. There was a great deal of latent profaneness in the controversial anathemas of the olden times.

Churchly disruptions within the memory of men now living have given vent to fraternal bitterness scarcely less revolting. American slavery tended to demonize everything that it touched. How many ecclesiastical assemblies have been infuriated by it! In one such, a reverend brother from Alabama affectionately invited his brother from Ohio, who had just acknowledged his investments in the "underground railroad," to visit him in his Southern home, and assured him that he would be welcomed to tar and feathers and a lamp-post!

I am reminded also of one of the critical assemblies of the Presbyterian Church, which occurred in my later boyhood. One of the several Drs. Breckinridge, brothers, was pre-eminent in his power of invective. He had an equal gift of the dialect of sympathy and of compliment. In public salutations he was a prince, so courtly was his manner and so elegant his style. His sermons were models of smooth and flowing rhetoric. On the occasion referred to, a brother presbyter of the New School rose to reply to the doctor's rasping criticism of him on the day before. To this hour

his introductory remark clings to my memory. Said he: "My brother from Kentucky well knows how to speak in elegant and oily phrase, but on this occasion he has misplaced his gift, and has poured out on my devoted head the oil of vitriol." Half a century has improved the civilization of our public bodies. We seldom hear in our religious convocations a specimen of the vitriolic comity.

26. Suspending the argument from prophecy, a forecast of the issue of the conflict of Christianity with the forces of evil in this world may be founded upon the history of Christianity hitherto. That which it has already done for mankind gives no doubtful promise of what it will do in the last times, be they distant or near.

To estimate such a history free from mental bias, we should imagine the effects which it records to have been wrought by other causes. Suppose them to have been the fruit of other sacred books than ours. Imagine that the Hindoo Vedas had achieved for the world all that the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures have achieved, in creating nations, literatures, civilizations; could a doubt exist of their final conquest of all other powers which create human destiny? Confucius died about twenty-four hundred years ago. Imagine that his writings had made the Chinese Empire what the British Empire is to-day. Would philosophic minds look farther to discover the system of morals or religion which is destined to overspread the world?

27. In estimating the adaptations of Christianity to be a world-wide faith in the ages to come, one fact should have decisive weight, — that it is the only system of faith of which the world has made trial which combines dogmatic religious beliefs with corresponding principles of morality. It builds ethics on religion. The ancient religions, excepting that of the Hebrews, which was Christianity in embryo, had no systems of ethics. They did not profess to have any. Ante-Christian ethics, so far as they existed outside of Hebrew literature, were independent of religion. Neither had any radical relation to the other. A Greek or Roman devotee might be guilty of all the crimes and vices known to the criminal code of ancient jurisprudence, and it made no difference to his character as a religionist. He might be the most execrable of mankind in the courts of law, yet he could cross the street into a temple of religion, and there be a saint. In the temple of Bacchus or of Venus his very vices were virtues. The identity of morals and religion is a Christian discovery.

28. There are religions of the soil. They abide where they were born. They develop no power of self-expansion and no facility of migration. Rooted in the tastes of one race, they do not grow into affinity with other races. They are intrinsically provincial and stationary. Of this immobile type Christianity is not. It has restless migratory impulses — tastes we may almost call them — which forecast its destiny of dominion. It is emphatically

the religion of colonization and of commerce. Always and everywhere it is the pioneer of beneficent change and of undying youth. It transplants itself into nascent languages and cements antagonistic races from which elect nations spring.

29. The predicted triumphs of Christianity suggest the very probable hypothesis that in forms of oral address it is to command a hearing from immense assemblies. Certain features of Christian life require for their best development the interplay of sympathy and the stimulus of members in such assemblies. There are graces of the closet and graces of the crowd. The self-diffusive force of our religion also cannot have full sway without the incidental aid of multitudes to work with as well as to work upon.

30. The concentration of populations in great cities, in this view, offers one of its best aspects. It gives to the future of Christian enterprise the opportunities which it needs for the assembling of large congregations. A clerical traveller visiting the market places and amphitheatres of Southern Europe can scarcely escape the thought of the conveniences they furnish for discourse to immense numbers in the open air. Imagine an Italian Whitefield preaching in the Colosseum at Rome! The golden age of street-preaching is yet to be.

31. The preaching of the Gospel will not achieve results which will much exceed its present average of success till the spirit of aristocratic caste is extirpated from our churches. Metro-

politan clusters of church-edifices in fashionable localities and from which the poor are practically excluded are a flat contradiction to the spirit of our Lord. Alienation of classes in the Christian brotherhood is a blank wall in the path of progress which no human power can overleap.

32. The religion of Christ contains an element of power over the future in its teaching of the possibility of amiable relations between God and men. Paganism knew nothing of such relations between the worshipper and the objects of worship. The mythologies, speaking in the general, had no lovable gods. The incentive to worship was fear. The gods were deified men. If not purely malign, they were selfishness personified. As such they leaned to malign qualities in character. Hindoo mothers flung their children to the crocodiles of the Ganges as a propitiatory offering to deities whose nature was like the crocodile. Love from man to God and love from God to man are Christian discoveries. Human worship, just in proportion as it has differed from Christian worship, has developed a frightful approximation to devil worship. Pagan art discloses this in the manufacture of deities. Idols are frequently hideous representatives of the malign passions.

33. It is impossible to understand some passages of the Scriptures otherwise than as teaching that the moral power of Christian believers is competent to effect results in the moral world which shall have the impressiveness of miracles in the

natural world. Until such phenomena appear in the progress of the world's conversion, we must believe that immense energies lie occult and unused in the bosom of the Church.

34. Christian evangelizing of the nations has now a history which has made the theory of missions a science. One of its axioms is that civilization is a sequence, not an antecedent of the evangelizing of a heathen people. The most facile and expeditious way to uplift men to the level of civil freedom is first to Christianize them. The initial step in fitting men for self-government is to teach them obedience to the government of God. Nothing else dignifies man in his own consciousness like a spiritual religion. The first sign of success in the early missions to the Hawaiian Islands was that the natives began to wear clothes. From that germ of the sense of personal dignity the gifts and graces of an advanced civilization have grown.

35. In estimating the probabilities of the future progress of mankind, the fact is a significant one, that no nation has ever *voluntarily* receded into darker ages than the best in its history. Conservative tastes have never driven or enticed a civilized people backward by their own choice. Romantic sentiment may *look* backward, but the common sense never *walks* backward of its own will. A complex civilization never gives way to one of primeval simplicity. Philosophers of erratic notions have sported with the idea that savage life is happier or purer than that of high culture, but no

nation or race has ever been so fascinated by it as to attempt its reduction to practice in real life. Eager pedestrians lean forward. So does the human race bend with all its will power into the future.

36. Especially is it true that those forces which Christianity has put into the civilization of the great races are growing forces. They have been born with a destiny of thrift. Catastrophes which threaten their perpetuity are never long-lived. The tendencies to national decline which they set in motion are *tidal* movements — not the oceanic currents of the deep seas. We do not yearn for mediæval life any more than we do for the tastes of our cannibal ancestors. A voluntary retrograde from a Christian civilization by a nation once possessed of it would be equivalent to national suicide — a doom which no people ever sought in fact or tolerated in idea.

37. The advancement of religion in the world often seems to be threatened with suspension by its perversions and corruptions. Superstitious beliefs, spurious revivals, and fanatical reforms often have the look of a decline and fall of best things. Best things corrupted become the worst. Such is sometimes the look of affairs on the surface of social agitations. Not so is it written in the book of destiny. Things evil, when stirred up by a quickened moral sense, have a chance of regeneration. Spurious revivals set men to pondering the eternal verities. The very judgment that

they *are* spurious is founded on a superior ideal. Imbecile superstitions are built on a certain residuum of truth, without which men could not recognize their imbecility. Fanatical convulsions awaken a great deal of sober and healthy thinking. The existence of the extreme proves the reality of the mean. So it is that evil works out good through Divine reactions. Light gleams out of darkness. Even lightning from thunder-clouds is light. Salvation armies and Christian crusades are not the inspired models of religious activity, but it requires a profounder religious life to create the intuition that they are not. Christianity is a system of beliefs and practices which has immense powers of deglutition and assimilation. It can carry a dense mass of evil in its history without lapsing into a state of moral convulsion.

38. It is a striking fact, bearing upon this world's future, that civilization gives no sign of perpetuity in history, till it is transplanted into Christianity. Independently, like all other social forces of human origin, it rots and dies. Only when it is rooted in Christian ideas does it give promise of a future. The most corrupt nations have been the most accomplished in civilized graces. The most appalling downfalls of great races have been the ending of the most illustrious careers of national renown. The ante-Christian civilizations have betrayed a frightful tendency to the development of cruelty and lust in national entertainments and the rites of national religions. They

taught men to luxuriate in the sufferings of their fellows, and to adore their deities by acts of bestiality.

39. A fact not often estimated at its full worth in our forecast of this world's future is that in its Biblical representations the law of prayer has a certain *supremacy* over other laws concerned in human destiny. Within certain limits sovereignty is assigned to mind over matter. The moral kingdom takes precedence of the realm of nature. Our earth gives abundant evidence of its subordination to moral uses and redemptive purposes. And in keeping with this adjustment of things, an imperial authority is awarded in the Bible to prayer over material forces.

Fixed laws of Nature certainly have been suspended at the bidding of believing prayer. More than once the grave has given up the dead at its imperial command. We assume more than we know, therefore, when we affirm that never, under any possible contingencies, can such an obeisance of natural to moral law take place again. There is a startling freedom from qualification in the language of Biblical assurance to a Christian suppliant. It is not uttered stealthily in a whisper. Nor is it expressed in dubious intimations, as if the speaker feared that he might say too much.

40. It is impossible, within hearing of this regal echo of inspired promise, to resist the conviction that, in the main, prayer is yet one of the occult forces of the universe. Immense reserves

of its power are yet latent and unused by Christian faith. It has never yet been put to the full proof of its possibilities. Of all the forces known to us, it is the last that can be imperilled by future discoveries of the works and ways of God. Who can dare to limit the resources of such a power over the ultimate destinies of mankind? Especially when a spiritual power like this is committed to a spiritual work like that of the world's con-conversion, with the sympathies and correspondencies of myriads of Christian minds interplaying between, where is room for doubt of the result?

41. The outlook of conquest which Biblical prophecy gives to the closing periods of mundane history suggests the possible return of miracle to the resources of the Church. Who knows enough of the marvels of those last times, to affirm that the exigencies which they will create will not also create such a demand for miracle as to make it reasonable to the mind of God? Who knows enough of the possibilities of expansion in spiritual forces, to declare that prayer cannot achieve ascendency over natural laws in those coming ages, as it did in the saintly history of ancient times?

42. It is cheering to observe, even in the present conditions of Christendom, tokens of a much broader subjection of civilized mind to the spiritual reign of truth than is commonly recognized in the statistics of Christian sects. The number of regenerate souls is probably much larger than the

Church reckons among her converts. Circles upon circles of illumined minds revolve around the solar centre which the Church represents. They resemble the rings of Saturn. How many of them are elect spirits we cannot estimate. But that multitudes of them are such cannot well be questioned. A Christian civilization is a grand product of Christian redemption. Lines of spiritual sympathy run to and fro between them. If we could express in numbers the spiritual conquests of the Cross, we should doubtless find millions upon millions of true believers in these outside realms of civilized thought.

Christianity is thus putting forth its feelers to gather in uncounted and unknown fruits. Many such saved ones are in the twilight of corrupt churches in which truth is not yet extinct. Commerce has carried germs of Christian thought into the shadow of heathen temples. Christianized languages are crowding hard upon those of pagan origin. Christian ideas of liberty and of political economy are pushing their way underneath ancient despotisms. It is impossible that such tributaries to the Gospel should not scatter broadcast the seeds which shall spring up in the regeneration of souls. The disclosures of the great Day will surprise us by the magnitude of its spiritual triumphs. Despised races will be seen to contribute to immense majorities of the redeemed. God counts nothing lost which *can* be saved. These secondary workings of redemptive purpose

are preparatory to the marvellous rapidity of its achievements in this world's closing scenes. They give more than hints of the fact that the last sun which will dawn on its spiritual history will go down in unclouded glory.

XI.

METHODISM—ITS WORK AND ITS WAYS.

1. The Methodist Episcopal Church is a striking illustration of the principle that every great Christian sect is built on a necessity. It comes into being because it must come.

The rise of Methodism was the birth of a spiritual reform of which all the Christian denominations in Great Britain and America were in desperate need. The Established Churches of England and Scotland were dying of spiritual *anæmia*. Dr. Blair at Edinburgh and Bishop Porteous at London were droning moral platitudes in the pulpit, while the masses of the people, especially in England, never heard of them or of the Gospel they professed to preach. Never before, nor since, has the phenomenon been so signally developed, of Christianity gasping in the struggle to live on the religion of Nature. The religion of the realm was Christianity without Christ. All that was peculiar to it as a way of salvation was practically ignored. Among the ruling classes religious convictions had no intensity, and religious life no reality.

2. Bishop Butler gave it as a reason for publish-

ing the "Analogy," that "it has come to be taken for granted that Christianity is no longer a subject of inquiry, but is now discovered to be fictitious." As for the English court, Bishop Stevens has told the whole story in saying: "It was a royal brothel." Dr. Samuel Johnson was contemporary with John Wesley. He told his friend Boswell: "I can remember the time when it was common for English gentlemen to go to bed drunk every night in the week, and they were thought none the worse of for it." Such was England when Methodism came as an angel of rebuke.

The chief power in saving to the future the old Church of Cranmer and Ridley was the Methodist revival. It broke upon the kingdom in tongues of flame. Then was the golden age of field-preaching. In the venerable cathedrals of England the magnates of the Church on the Lord's Day preached to a dozen hearers; sometimes to less; occasionally to nobody but the sexton and the choir. An audience of two hundred was a crowd. The Dean of St. Patrick's in Dublin once preached to the sexton alone. His sermon, all told, as my memory recalls the story, was: "Be a good man, John, and a Tory." At the same time Wesley and Whitefield were haranguing ten and twenty thousands at a time in the open air. The wisdom of the city fathers of Boston had not then illumined the world.

3. The movement began, as religious awakenings usually do, among the lower orders. But its

refluent waves soon rolled up over the heights of cultivated society. The infidel lords, Bolingbroke and Chesterfield, rode out in their crested carriages to see "what these Methodist loons were making such an ado about." David Hume and Benjamin Franklin studied the phenomenon with knitted brows as a psychological enigma. Every Protestant sect in England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, and America felt the reviving thrill.

4. Methodism in those days had its baptism of fire. It met the usual fate of religious reformations in being detested and maligned. The name, as is well known, became the synonym of social vulgarity. To become a "Methody" was to drop out of sight of respectability. Men lost caste by it, even in humble life. Chimney-sweeps and bootblacks grinned at the discovery that there was a rung of the social ladder below theirs. Cowardly inquirers denounced "the humbug" roundly in the daytime, and crept into the chapels on the sly in the twilight. Families were disrupted by it, as by the "Wars of the Roses." Sons and daughters were disinherited for leaving the parish church for the conventicle. "I came not to send peace on earth, but a sword." But none the less for that, the mother church, and every church, felt the new spirit in the air.

5. The Church of England could no more withstand it than she could have withstood the day of judgment. To her it *was* the day of judgment, but for the "remnant which was left" within her

pale which recognized the voice of a prophet. English Christianity has never lost the elements of spiritual life which Methodism, by direct reproof and by the power of contrast, then put into it. For her noble missions of a later day, for her fidelity to the faith as expressed in her incomparable Litany, and for her faithfulness to the masses of the poor at home, in the ways practicable to her stately polity, the Church of England to-day is largely indebted to the stimulant and remonstrant action of Methodism upon her vital powers. It regenerated them. It brought back into living use the resources which had been buried in her ancient standards, and her Book of Prayer, and her martyrology. Methodism saved the Anglican Church from extinction. It was a re-enforcement of apostolic Christianity, also, in every other Christian denomination in the English-speaking nations and colonies. We have all felt the throb of its pulsations. It has been what new blood is to falling dynasties and decadent races.

6. Methodism has done for the Christian world another service. She has contributed improvements of inestimable value to the popular theology. In theological science, strictly so called, Methodism has not been illustrious. Her great theologians are yet to be. Wesley seems not to have cared much about truth in dogmatic forms. His mind was of the executive order. His convictions were facts articulate. He seized upon a few fundamental ideas of Christianity as facts rather

than as doctrines. Beyond affirming these, he built a church on the principle, as he put it, "of liberty to think and let think." The leaders of the reform, with perhaps one exception, were preachers rather than theologians. Its throne was the pulpit, not the school. Yet to the theology of the people its pulpit has done good, knightly service. It has been a stout ally of those who have labored to eliminate from the popular notion of Christianity the fictions of limited atonement and the servitude of the human will.

7. Before the advent of Methodism, these dogmas, to the majority of minds which came under their influence, had made salvation an impracticable business. Theoretically, the popular mind could make nothing else of it. The speculations in which adroit minds essayed to untie the knot in which these dogmas had bound popular inquiry had little weight in the pulpit. They were not useful there, because they could not be *used*. In many pulpits the preaching of repentance to unregenerate men had absolutely ceased. Logical minds holding those dogmas could not preach it. In private they said so, and in the pulpit they were dumb. To preach repentance as a duty to men who could not repent, and who until they did could have no assurance that the sacrifice of Christ had any concern with them, was an insult to the hearer and stultification to the preacher. Sensible men felt this and revolted. They would not sow seed on a marble quarry. Rowland Hill once, on

entering a certain church, was admonished: "We preach only to the elect here." "So will I," he replied, "if you will put a label on them."

8. Methodism cut the knot. Wesley and his associates denied the limitation of the atoning sacrifice by Divine decree. They did it in no obscure or silken speech. They denounced the dogma with vehemence and scorn. They defied it as an invention of the devil. Indeed, throughout the controversy with Calvinism, Wesley was a savage. He spared neither foe nor friend, not even Whitefield. He gave us the iron hand bare of the velvet glove. But his unkempt ferocity of method achieved its object. It said what he meant, and hewed the way clean to the liberty of proclaiming a free salvation. That he and his successors flung broadcast. They preached it exultingly. They preached it like men freeborn. It gave a ring of gladness to their ministrations. The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs, at the sound of their voices.

9. There was an electric spring to conquest in the Gospel as they projected it upon the quivering sensibilities of men, which made it seem to them a novelty. The immense assemblies in the fields, when they listened to the impassioned harangues of Whitefield and Wesley, seemed to themselves to hear the word of God for the first time. Then, first, the offer of salvation meant something to them. Men and women who, all their lives, had been droning the confession that they were "mis-

erable sinners," not believing a word of it, suddenly found out that it was a fact. Sermons, as they heard them, were full of personal allusions. Then Christ became to them a necessity; and because a necessity, a reality. The sympathy of numbers redoubled the force of the convictions which sprung up in the soul of every one. Light shone reflected from a thousand mirrors. The Day of Pentecost dawned again.

10. Human freedom in matters of religion came to the faith of the Methodist commonalty more circuitously. Yet it came with scarcely less power of persuasion as a corollary from the ministrations of the Methodist pulpit. Not as clear-cut dogma in theological science, such as it appears — and nowhere else so luminously — in the latter Calvinism of New England, but as *fact*, the freedom of the human will has been built into Methodist theology as the people have conceived it from the beginning. Men who have denied it as dogma have used it as fact. The Wesleys denied it, but John Wesley preached it in his forty thousand sermons, and Charles Wesley sung it in hymns which have been heard around the globe.

This contradiction, which was no contradiction, grew out of the intensity of the faith of the early Methodists in individual responsibility. "The living soul in moral solitude with God" was the key-note of their preaching. Wesley used to say to his lay preachers: "Remember you have but

one thing to do — to bring the individual soul to Christ."

11. Now, no man can have his own soul set aflame with a sense of the responsibility of the individual man to a personal God, of a guilty man to a holy God, of a redeemed man to a self-sacrificing God, and *not* preach the ability of man to obey God. No matter whether he believes it as dogma or not, he will preach it as fact. He will preach it with a force of implication which amounts to certainty. He may give to it one name or another, or none. He may call it "natural ability," as the later Calvinism of New England does; or "gracious ability," as Wesley did; or no ability at all, as the elder Calvinism did; he will so preach it that awakened hearers will take it in and trust it and use it as *ability* pure and simple. In a great spiritual reform it will become a power of spiritual life in the popular thinking. And this is what Methodism made of it. As the groundwork of individual responsibility, it has been set home to the conscience by the Methodist pulpit with an intensity of conviction which has often swept everything before it.

12. Robert Southey says that, of all the hymns in the English language, "none are more devoutly committed to memory and more frequently repeated on death-beds, than certain hymns by Charles Wesley." But Methodist Hymnology has done a broader service than that. When the Methodist pulpit has proved the power of men to repent by

constraining them to act it with tears of godly sorrow, then the great congregation has caught it up, and, as if moved by the baton of an angel in the sky, has echoed and re-echoed it in hymns which have borne up the faith of souls in it as on the wings of the wind. Where in the comparison are our thundering organs and our surpliced boys posing in dim cathedrals; and where our puny quartettes performing before dumb assemblies?

13. For the planting of great Christian truths deep in the heart of an awakened people, let us have John Wesley's tongue of fire, seconded by Charles Wesley's hymns floating heavenward on the twilight air from ten thousand Methodist voices. Under such conditions Methodism is inspired. To know what Methodist voices are under that inspiration, one must hear them. Mobs, bellowing with infuriated blood-thirst, which neither John Wesley's coal-black eye, nor Whitefield's imperial voice, could quell, have been known to turn and slink away when the truth was *sung at* them in Charles Wesley's hymns. Their ringleaders more than once broke down in tears and groans of remorse. They took the preacher by the hand, and went his way with him, arm in arm, swearing by all that is holy that not a hair of his head should be touched. Thus was Luther's saying verified anew: "The devil can stand anything but good music, and that makes him roar."

In this method of transfusion from the faith in individual responsibility, faith in man's power to

repent has been in part the soul of every great Methodist revival, from the gathering of sixty thousand souls at Moorfields down to the last autumnal camp-meeting in the forests of Maine. Partly by the force of this Methodist intensity in the use of it, and partly by its own good sense, it has made its way as a living fact into the heart of churches whose standards to this day disown it as a dogma of speculative belief.

14. This is a magnificent service, however imperfect and illogical, to the Church universal. No other truth so vital to spiritual religion has had so painful a birth as this of human freedom in the act of repentance. Augustine and his predecessors paganized Christianity in this respect for a thousand years. The reformers left the truth substantially as they found it. Calvinism, as defined in the Genevan and Scotch theologies, and in the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Anglican Church as well, was dead fatalism. The popular mind could not logically get anything better from it. The offer of salvation, loaded with the doctrine of inability, meant no more to multitudes of hearers than "Selah" did in the old editions of the Psalms. The struggles of the Calvinistic mind to rid itself of the incubus have not been a brilliant success. Ability to obey God has been sometimes denied and affirmed in the same creed. Scores of sermons have been made a shuttlecock of it. Forth and back and forth again it has been knocked about, till it has fallen to the ground through sheer exhaustion

in the hand which has held the battledoor. Never a man has been the wiser.

15. We have reason to be grateful to any embodiment of Christian thought, or enterprise, which has helped us ever so infirmly to rescue such a truth from its tribulations, and restore it to its place as a power of spiritual life. The most triumphant way of proving any doctrine involved in human duty is to *use* it. Persuade men to act it out by *doing* their duty. Make it thus prove itself as fact, and time will take care of it as dogma. This Methodism has done for the doctrine of human freedom, through the whole of her splendid history.

16. The history of the first generation of Methodism reads like a romance. It reminds one of the uprisings in the crusades at the call of Peter the Hermit. Wesley inherited from his indomitable mother the courage of mediæval chivalry. Military men recognized in him a born leader. Mobs were cowed by the look of his eye. On one occasion a company of men who had sworn to take his life approached a group of his friends, inquiring, "Which is he?" He calmly stepped to the front and replied, "I am he." They were awed into dead silence. How like to a certain other group, who, on a memorable occasion, "went back and fell to the ground." That spirit he breathed into the whole movement of which his mind was the interior spring. He illustrated the saying of a wise man, that "God will not have His work made manifest by cowards."

17. Methodist enterprise has been adventurous in the *choice of localities* for evangelistic labor. It is a notable phenomenon of religious awakenings that the leaders develop migratory tastes in the extreme. There are no fixed stars among them. They seldom have the desire or the faculty for stationary labors. Successful evangelists are seldom successful pastors. Migration has characterized the whole development of Methodism. The missions of Wesley and Whitefield to this country, when six weeks on the Atlantic made a short passage, were examples. Whitefield was on his seventh tour in America when he died. Wesley travelled in Great Britain, chiefly in the saddle, nearly the equivalent of twelve times round the globe. In the main, he sought the localities which others did not seek, and which commonly did not seek him.

18. From the beginning the aspiration of Methodism has been to take possession of the ends of the earth. Wherever man has gone Methodism has gone. It has been emphatically the religion of the frontier and the backwoods. In its infancy, certainly, whatever may be true now, it did not hanker after metropolitan luxury, nor recoil from the privations of colonial exile. Wesley was once admonished by the assessors that he had omitted to report the amount of his silver-plate for taxation. He replied: "My silver-plate consists of two spoons and a porridge-bowl, and I shall not purchase more while my countrymen are suffering for

the want of bread." We may safely affirm that such a man never prayed that the lines might fall to him in pleasant places.

Mr. Hilliard, in his work entitled "Six Months in Italy," remarks it as a sign of England's care for her honor, and the protection of her subjects, that she keeps a man-of-war anchored "within twenty-four hours of everywhere." Similar has been the spirit of Methodist evangelistic enterprise. Wherever an English or American colony migrates, it is very apt to find a Methodist preacher within a day's ride of its location, who makes a bee-line for it the next morning. The first emigrant wagon-train of considerable size crossing the Plains to the Pacific Coast carried a Methodist itinerant. This at least *has been* the genius of Methodism. One hears, now and then, lamentations in whisper from its despondent fathers that the former times were better than these. Of that they may speak who know. But historic Methodism is of this adventurous type. This is its idea of Christianity.

19. More signally still has the spirit of consecrated adventure been developed in the choice of the *classes of society* among whom chiefly Methodism has elected to labor.

One thing we must confess with downcast eye. It is the tendency of the great Christian sects to lean upon worldly greatness for their prestige. In apostolic times Christian assemblies needed the admonition respecting the man with "a gold ring

and in goodly apparel." Their successors to-day have not outlived the need. They seek prestige inordinately from wealth and culture. The philosophic historian of modern Europe contends that "a certain portion of worldly splendor is requisite to maintain even the cause of truth." One of the four things for which De Quincey gave thanks in a review of his life was that he was "the child of a *magnificent* church." Witnesses have borne testimony before the English Parliament that they had "never seen a poor man in soiled or tattered garments in a church of the Establishment." State churches have taken the lead in this corruption, but others have not been ashamed to follow, at varying distances in their rear.

20. This drift of denominational affinities is not without its palliations. Christianity has a natural affiliation with culture, with refinement, with learning, with industrial thrift and its rewards. If it does not find these, it creates them. It plants great cities. It develops expensive tastes. It aspires to the noblest and the best in all things. It builds "after the similitude of a palace." Its ultimate trophies are superlatives. Therefore, to desire those things which are the signs of Christian civilization at its best is not necessarily a sin. To preach the Gospel to those who possess them is not a crime. Somebody must do it; why not John Wesley, if he can bear the perils of the service? Why not your sect or mine, if power and opportunity be given? Said Lord Shaftesbury at a

foreign missionary meeting in England: "I beg you not to forget the rich and noble heathen of London, whose souls are starving."

21. But here is the rub: Christian sects as a whole have *not* borne the temptations of worldly aggrandizement with impunity. With many and noble individual exceptions, they have succumbed to the perils of building Christianity on the very highlands which it has itself uplifted. They have sought prestige often from souls civilized rather than from souls saved. There has sometimes been more joy at the parsonage and the vestry over one rich man who repented than over the opportunity to save the ninety-and-nine who did not repent. Has any sect, clergy, age, country, escaped wholly this miserable effeminacy? Have we not all suffered from the taint which it has injected into our spiritual life-blood?

State churches commonly die of this moral *pyæmia*. History has not yet proved that, without reformatory awakenings from outside, and disciplinary dislodgements within, a church of Christ welded to the State *can* be saved from sinking into a Sybaritic civilization in which the crumpled rose-leaf takes all spirit out of her for evangelistic enterprise.

22. Such was in the main the condition of the Church of England when Wesley entered her priesthood. She was emphatically the church of the noble and the gentleman. The masses of the poor had forgotten her and been forgotten by her.

At no period of her history had she been more fatally entangled in her worldly alliances. Her high places were in the gift of immoral statesman, and her low places were the rewards of their dependents. Churchly livings were sometimes given at the solicitation of mistresses. The majority of the clergy looked on blinking, and professing to believe that God was well pleased.

23. Methodism — whatever it may be now — was at its birth an intrepid and exasperated revolt from that secularized corruption of Christianity. Wesley had no prolonged self-conflict about it as Luther had respecting the degeneracy of Rome. He had no more doubts than he had of the hour and the minute of his own conversion. That event occurred, as he tells us with artless assurance, "at a quarter before nine o'clock on the evening of Wednesday, May 24, 1738." The positiveness of undoubting conviction was in the make of the man. What he saw he believed, and what he believed he knew. He expended no mental force on misgivings.

It was with a whole soul, therefore, that he flung himself impetuously against that theory of Christianity which made it the sycophant of the great, and dependent on them for its place in history. He fell back on first principles, and declared that it was pre-eminently the religion of the poor. As preached by him and his associates, its great successes were among colliers and peasants. Tears made gutters down the grimy faces of thousands

who listened to them in the fields of Cornwall. To his theological pupils he said: "Remember that you are to give account of God's poor. You have no business to be gentlemen" — using the word in its technical English sense; "you have no more business to be gentlemen, than you have to be dancing-masters." That was the inspiration of the Methodist Awakening.

24. To appreciate the chivalry of this action, we should remember that Wesley was himself a gentleman and the son of a gentleman. None but gentle blood was in his veins. Through his mother he was related to an English earldom. He was a priest of the Church of England, and to the day of his death he loved her. He was a graduate of the most aristocratic of her universities. He could not but be proud of his country's history; and, like all Englishmen of his day, proud also of her nobility. It was a heroic thing for such a man to do to fling the gauntlet over the battlements of English caste, and declare to the church of his father: "You have been false to your mission as a church of Christ." That was a living echo of our Lord's words to John the Baptist: "Go and tell him that sent you, that the poor have the Gospel preached unto them." So nearly identical with primitive Christianity was primitive Methodism.

25. The adventurous spirit of the Methodist reformation appears further, in its *methods of approach* to the lowly classes.

Some other sects have offered to the humbler orders of society a gospel of condescension; Methodism has offered them a gospel of equality. Others have treated them with distant and dignified beneficence; Methodism has made friends of them. Some others have courteously called to them from over the way to repent and be saved — and — and — stay where they are! Methodism has gone over to them and taken them by the hand, saying: "Come with us; we have found Christ." Others have gathered them into mission churches; Methodism has welcomed them to the best she had. "Mine are thine," she said.

26. At the first, Methodist churches were built of plain materials and homely architecture, that they might seem home*like* to the multitudes to whom æsthetic tastes were in cloud-land. The temple outside was in keeping with the worshippers inside. For this and other like things in their policy, Dr. Johnson — stout aristocrat as he was — said that the "Methodists should be commended by all men of sense." Why not? As a temporary policy, what could have better suited the emergency? What could the colliers of Cornwall have made of the refined, philosophic sentiment of Coleridge that "a Gothic church is a petrified religion"? Colliers do not want a petrified religion. The early Methodists had the good sense to know it, and the courage to act upon their knowledge.

27. We have all of us, according to the knack given to us, been "fishers of men." But many of us

have fished with a pole, and some with a long pole, and a few with a very long pole, daintily tapering to the end, and quivering with one little fish at the bait, while Methodism has fished with the net. Methodist faith has seen in the individual soul anywhere a possible temple of the Holy Ghost. In it He might speak with authority to the wisest. She has therefore harkened for His teachings from the lips of the ignorant. She has inquired of men in coal mines: "What has the Lord done for your souls?" Then she has listened for their answer in reverent silence. When it has come, fresh and clear from quickened hearts, she has been tolerant of ungrammatical speech, and grotesque illustration, and awkward gesture, and vociferous declamation, and stentorian prayer, and unconscious vanity. She has risked her good name for this mission to the lowly. In this, who will venture to say that she has not acted with wisdom from on high?

28. True, Methodism has not by any means been alone in this exhibition of primitive Christianity. No sect has had a monopoly of it. But she has been so far eminent in it as to be justly called pre-eminent. The gospel of equality, as distinct from the gospel of condescension, has found in her its elect apostle. And she has had her reward. She has Christianized immense multitudes who, so far as we can judge, would not have been saved by any other agency.

29. A shrewd observer of human faces has said

that every Christian sect has its own physiognomy. There is a certain combination of tendencies and tastes and qualities, bodily and mental, which for the want of a better name we may call a *temperament*, which has responded to the Methodist pulpit more genially than to any other. It is a temperament largely developed in the English and American stock of mind. Methodism has saved men of its own temperament to Christianity by millions. Whole strata of society have thus been penetrated by Christian truth. Solid blocks of ignorance and depravity have been broken up and turned over to the light of Heaven.

The immaculate Church is yet to be. But with all the deficiencies, theological and ecclesiastical and liturgical, of the Methodist Church, the Church Universal has reason to thank God for her magnificent history. It has expedited by untold years the conversion of the world to Christ.

30. One other fact should not be forgotten. Methodism approximates Romanism, though in the far distance, in her obligations to the character of one woman. Of the well-known principle that it is the mothers who make great men, the humble mistress of the rectory at Epworth is perhaps the most illustrious example on record. Susanna Wesley, down to the last year of her life, — and she lived into the tenth decade, — did much to shape the ministry of her sons. The element of lay preaching in the Methodist economy is due to the adventurous cast of her mind. Her son

John was jealous of the innovation. He hastened back from Bristol to London to put a stop to it in the person of one of his recent converts. On his arrival he said, with much discomposure: "I hear that Thomas Maxwell has taken to the pulpit." His mother replied: "John, wait; do nothing rashly. At first I thought as you do. But I have heard Thomas Maxwell preach, and I tell you that he has as much right to preach as you have." John did wait; he heard for himself, and said: "It is the Lord; let Him do what seemeth Him good!" Well does Robert Southey say that "the mother of the Wesleys was the mother of Methodism."

XII.

MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS.

1. The Theatre is older by centuries than the Christian pulpit. Both claim to be moral instructors of the people. Both have experimented side by side, in the same communities, upon the same races, surrounded by the same civilizations, and both often with the prestige of subsidies by the State. The Theatre has had a monopoly of dramatic literature in its most brilliant accumulations for ages. What in the result has the Theatre to show in the comparison with its junior rival? What institutions has it founded which are essential to human welfare? A single sermon preached by a Welsh divine was the means of founding an orphan asylum which still exists. What one trophy of its moral power can be found like that in the history of the Stage? The pulpit originated the fundamental idea of federal union which was wrought into the structure of American liberty at the birth of our Republic. For what one such idea is the world indebted to the Theatre? By their fruits ye shall know them.

2. Of the conservative and the progressive principles there can be no question which should be

ascendant in the policy and tastes of a preacher. The pulpit is built on a prophecy. The prime reason for its existence is the promise that this world is to be converted to Jesus Christ. Its chief outlook therefore should be upon the future. Yet an educated clergy almost inevitably acquire tastes which, if not balanced by their opposites, incline to conservatism in the extreme. Culture tends to passive virtues in character and therefore to conservative repression in enterprise.

3. Intimations abound in the New Testament, which indicate a foresight on the part of the Apostles, that the religion they brought would be a secret germ of revolution in all departments of human thought. In the nature of things it could not be otherwise. Nothing else penetrates so profoundly the springs of social action and reaction as the moral regeneration of a fallen world. Revolution is its primal law. Progress is its sign of life.

4. When conservative tastes set themselves against the progressive convictions which are the natural product of Christian ideas, they produce the very evils which conservative minds dread. Conservative repression is the prelude to volcanic upheavals. It tends to make progressive opinion rabid and reform malign. Reform will always be fanatical when religion is stagnant. It was conservatism which crucified Christ. Such is conservative taste always when it becomes crystallized.

5. One phase of the philosophical argument in defence of revivals of religion is seldom appreciated by their opponents. It is that vast sympathetic awakenings of men in masses are more natural in matters of religion than in any other. On no other subject are the interests of men so compactly one. The religious nature is the same the world over. Its awakenings on the grand scale are not dependent on diversities of culture or varieties in the scale of civilization. They may be of great power and purity in a very dilatory state of social progress.

6. Some errors and abuses will die if we give them time to die. We have only to let them alone. They will fall to pieces through their own want of that adhesive vitality which cements and consolidates institutions. It is as old as Tacitus, that "truth is established by investigation and *delay*." A truism from Goethe is to the same effect that "it is not by assaulting the false, but by affirming the true, that good is done." A double service to truth is rendered, when it is advanced without belligerent excitements. Assume that no enemies are in sight, and commonly there are none in ambush. But they will spring at the sound of blows.

7. It is difficult to say which is productive of greater evil, to be a fanatic or to live in morbid fear of becoming one. Dr. Chalmers, speaking of

the charge of morbid agitations against the Methodists of Scotland, remarks: "I have uniformly found that the charge of fanaticism has been most vehemently preferred against those men whose spirit and whose language came nearest to the spirit and phraseology of the New Testament." To the same effect he observes respecting attempts to satisfy those who make the charge: "You cannot get the matter accommodated to their tastes, until you have made every heart as cold as lead and as motionless as a stone." Commonly the real state of the case with those who object to religious enthusiasm is "not that they would have this done rather than that, or that instead of another thing, but that they would have nothing done. "We are a quiet church" often means, "We are a somnolent church." Large masses of nen, *not* excited about eternal realities, are at war with nature.

8. The hostility of men to unusual developments of religious awakening is commonly a sign of their secret faith in such awakenings as the work of God. In the act of denouncing, men believe. They denounce because they believe. Men have no more profound faith than that which they hold, or rather which holds them, in a thing which rouses their malign passions.

9. The inherent debility of infidel thinking is seen in the paucity of its original ideas. At present, indeed, Christianity supplies its most effective

resources. The superiority of modern warfare upon Christian institutions is derived from ideas which they have themselves originated. The scepticism of our age is in one sense a Christianized system of thought. Its root is nourished by a Christian soil, and its branches by a Christian atmosphere. Such plausible assaults on the Christian faith could not have been constructed without appropriating some of the practical Christian ideas, yet not acknowledging their theoretic origin. That type of infidelity, for instance, which builds up a system of morality without recognition of a personal God, builds up *the* system which nothing else than Christianity could ever have given to the world.

10. Unbelievers in Christianity, above all other men, often betray illogical prejudices in giving a history of their opinions. Bolingbroke says that he was made an infidel by Dr. Manton's commentary on the 119th Psalm, which his mother compelled him to read in his boyhood, as a punishment for a childish folly. There may have been wiser women in her day than Lord Bolingbroke's mother. There may have been more exhilarating reading for a child than Dr. Manton's commentary. But what a confession is this for a bearded man to make of the inability of his manhood to outlive a prejudice of his boyhood! Any opinions held by such a man on the subject of religion must have been superficially rooted in his moral nature.

11. How should the Pulpit treat the tendency of reform to alliance with Infidelity? The antagonism between Christianity and infidel reform cannot be evaded. The ministry should offer no compromise and accept none. History teaches that little if any good can be achieved by any working alliance between Christian preachers and anti-Christian reformers. A preacher is always first a Christian, and then a reformer. That order of succession should never be reversed. But the pulpit should initiate its own reforms, and do it seasonably. We should assume that every social question which ought to be agitated will be agitated. The great peril of the ministry is that of delay. Preachers are often followers when they should have been pioneers. An infidel leadership supplants them in their national birthright. Because we cannot sacrifice religion to reform we should be all the more careful not to sacrifice reform to religion.

12. Christianity, in all its theories and enterprises for the regeneration of society, starts with the unit, not with the mass. It does not propose to reach the individual through the State, but the State through the individual. The profoundest depths of our nature do not appear in social relations and combinations; they are in the individual, secluded in their working, and incommunicable in their results. Reform, technically so called, is never the prime object of Christian enterprise.

From the individual to the family, thence to the Church, and ending in the world at large, is the line of Christian endeavor for the uplifting of the race.

13. The popular idea of the Puritans as men of ascetic and disconsolate conscience has grown largely out of the fact that they represented the religious reforms of their day. They lived in a historic crisis in which extreme conservatism in the Church of England developed itself in intense worldliness outside. They were the awakened mind of the age. They sought to reform the national amusements, because those amusements had degenerated into immoralities. They were forced upon quickened consciences by the laws of the realm. Human nature is very apt to discover reasons for not doing a thing which men are told that they must do. When such laws strike athwart conscientious convictions, the reaction becomes reform of a very intense and solemn kind. Men make a religion out of conscientious resistance to anything which is *inflicted* on conscience by civil law.

14. It is often observed that great men are seldom reproduced in their children. A parallel fact is that the originators of great popular awakenings which mark crises in human progress, seldom transmit their own enthusiasm and working force to the leaders who succeed them. What Richard Cromwell was to Oliver, the second generation of

reformers often is to the first. The period of one man's working years commonly measures the length of time for which such an awakening endures. Everywhere in the laws of succession the sovereignty of decree appears. Great reforms create great men for leadership. Grand leadership of men is almost never inherited.

15. It is not becoming in this generation to denounce the legislation of our fathers against witchcraft, till we are able to affirm some positive and reasonable opinions of the phenomena of spiritualism. The two classes of phenomena belong to an unexplored kingdom of either the natural or the supernatural. Whatever will explain the one will explain the other. We are as ignorant of both as our fathers were. We opine that they are natural phenomena, but we cannot claim that we have proved it till we have discovered the natural Cause. They opined that the phenomena were supernatural, and apparently they did prove that. To the best intelligence of the age they seemed to have in the Old Testament explicit authority for their convictions and their jurisprudence. The witchcraft of the Mosaic age seemed to tally well with the abnormal events of their own. They were positive men. They were stout believers. It would have been too much to expect of such men to sit down in the midst of such scenes with the quietude of agnostic indifference. Their convictions were less discreditable to them than our want

of convictions is to us. Neither witchcraft nor spiritualism is wholly explicable by natural laws then or now known to science. It is not yet proved that there is not a supernatural residuum of truth in both. So long as we are at our wit's end about the one, it behooves us to be modest in our judgments of the theory which the fathers held of the other. Whatever else was true or not true of them, they were *not* at their wit's end. To rest in an error, on the apparent authority of a revelation from Heaven, is a posture of greater dignity than to rest in nothing on the authority of either God or man.

16. Probably all men who pray at all, sometimes pray for a painless death. It is not certain that we are wise in this. The moral uses of bodily suffering are a mystery, yet not all a mystery. What its province may be in "last hours," who can tell? Its power to penetrate and fuse hardened natures may then come to the rescue of some who without its benignant discipline could not be prepared for spiritual discoveries. It should seem that the first disclosures of eternity cannot be welcome to one who has no moral tastes for their reception. Even the foundation of such tastes may not be laid in some natures except by the discipline of pain. Nor do we know what delicate operations the ministry of pain may set going in giving the finishing touches to a saintly character. The depth of a mystery is the measure of

the wisdom which it encloses. Two such enigmas as the way in which we come into this world and the way in which we leave it, are fitted to make us dumb with awe. Wisdom unsearchable must be in them; they are so strange and so painful.

17. The benevolence which Christianity inspires is characterized by five elements. It is intense in degree; it is inventive of expedients; it is vigilant of opportunities; it is appreciative of remote and invisible objects; and it is capable of studious and protracted exertions. The biographer of Sir Fowell Buxton says of him: "He walked through the world as through the wards of a hospital. He had a singular power of realizing to his own mind distant and unseen suffering, and on the compassion which it inspired founding a course of deliberate and sustained action."

18. Our age is characterized by a degree of irreverence which in former times would have shocked the same class of minds which now indulge it, apparently without remorse. Unbelief of Christianity was not formerly deemed a sufficient reason for ridiculing it in the faith of its humble believers. Within the memory of men now living, reticence respecting one's own disbelief of the Scriptures was regarded as the sign of a gentleman. Is it so now? One of our most popular essayists says that he "can conceive of Rabelais as going into convulsions of laughter at the folly of Satan

waging war with God." Something less deserving of respect than either wit or humor prompted the remark. Cicero displayed a finer taste and more healthy conscience in observing that "enormous wickedness is never esteemed ridiculous."

19. The evangelizing of the negro race in America is one of the exigent enterprises which will not bear to be left to the ordinary average of Christian progress. They cannot wait for its accomplishment. The white race cannot afford to make them wait. The work, if done at all, must in the interest of both races be done with speed. Several facts emphasize this view.

20. One is that the present religious condition of the freedmen, if not speedily improved, threatens a relapse towards barbarism. They have a religion which is called Christian, but among large numbers of them it is infected with that virus which dooms all corruptions of Christianity to decay, — the alienation of religion from morality. Many church members among them are equally glib of tongue in praying and in lying. They bless the Lord in the very act of larceny. They make much of baptism and little of the marriage vow. Said one to a missionary teacher, who reproved him for adultery: "I've been dipped, sir." Poor sufferers for the sins of others! Slavery, that providential "missionary institution" of which we used to hear so much, has confounded in their minds the first principles of Christian living.

Exceptions to this picture are of course numerous. In some localities the picture itself may be exceptional, and a purer type of piety the rule. But, from the somewhat conflicting testimony of eye-witnesses, one is compelled to infer that, taking the religion of the field-negroes into account, the barbaric elements are altogether too potent for the perpetuity of the Christian faith.

21. Moreover, the most disheartening feature of the case is that the type of Christianity which prevails among the "poor whites" around and above them is no better. The immoralities of Christian negroes they have copied from the superior race. They are an imitative people. They have inherited the habit of looking upon everything white as superior to anything black. One poor negress of queenly head and figure, when told that a sculptor would carve a bust of her as a representative of her race, was overjoyed to tears by the assurance that it would be in *white* marble. Not the distinction of the bust, but the color of the material, was the thing which overwhelmed her. The very vices of white men look respectable by the side of black virtues. A poor quadroon girl esteems it an honor to be the mistress of a white man. And the marvel of horrors is that in some instances her mother trains her so.

Such is the material from which our religion must select its representatives among the freedmen. Slavery has poisoned the whole religious atmosphere of the South. The classes low down

in the social scale have breathed the miasma in its most virulent precipitate.

22. Such a religion in either white or black cannot fairly be called the religion of a civilized race. It cannot long remain as it is; it must give place to something better or worse in no long time. Christianity is indignantly intolerant of its own corruptions. It is nauseated by them and spews them out, or its life-blood is poisoned by them and its own fevered and infuriated energy goes into them and dies with them. That nominally Christian people is in a woful plight whose religion is their ruin. Yet this is the doom which threatens the colored race at the South, if left to themselves, with no other regenerative influences than those which they have inherited and which are germane to the soil.

23. The exigency of the enterprise appears further in the prospect of extensive changes in the character of Southern labor. Hitherto the freedmen have been chiefly agricultural laborers. They have lived in the open air, under the bland and morally healthful influences of green fields, and blue skies, and forests, and the songs of birds. Agricultural labor everywhere is humanizing. So far it is auxiliary to Christianity in its unconscious sway over the character of a docile people. It is congenial especially with the refined and passive graces which it is so difficult to engraft upon uncultured mind.

But what is to be the future of Southern labor?

Those who have the best means of judging tell us that it is to be largely revolutionized. The subterranean resources of the South are to be developed. Her magnificent water-power is to be put to the service of human industries. In some States the cotton-field is to yield precedence to the factory, and the forge, and the mine. Georgia already takes rank among the great manufacturing States of the Republic. It is reported that some of her fabrics compete successfully with the same from the looms of Massachusetts. The amount of capital invested in manufacturing and mining enterprises of the South was augmented in a single year by fifty-two millions of dollars. This indicates no fragmentary or transient development of new industries.

24. It is not difficult to forecast the effect of this change in the conditions of Southern labor on the character of the laborer. He must pass out from the humanizing sway of agriculture, and come under the indurating influences of toil in heated workshops, and furnaces, and coal pits, and iron mines. All history declares that when labor retires from the open air and is shut in within four walls, or buried underground, it becomes more gross and barbarizing in its influence on the laborer. His mind becomes less receptive of religious ideas. His sensibilities are less responsive to their discipline. He is more prone to infidel thinking, and more easily dominated by atheistic leaders. In social crises he is more readily swept away by

malign excitements. In New England, the hotbeds of infidelity among the artisan classes are the shoeshops. In Old England Atheism is nowhere else so deeply rooted as in the factories of Birmingham and Manchester.

25. The changes referred to in Southern industries tend, therefore, the wrong way in their probable influence on negro character. They must render his spiritual regeneration more difficult. They must complicate it with political and social problems, the agitation of which by an injured race cannot be friendly to the best type of Christian manhood. Fifty years hence Christian enterprise may find in the laboring elements of Southern society the most unmanageable extremes of communistic infidelity. The savagery of Africa may be found to have run through the life-blood of servile generations, to reappear at last in a more ferocious, because a more knowing, hostility to the religion of the superior race. The evil may be redoubled by the animal fecundity of the negro, which he has in common with all servile races, and which may treble and quadruple the numbers of his class.

26. Mr. Cable, in one of his admirable essays on the Silent South, speaks of the new industries of Birmingham, Alabama. He writes: "It was fine to see the crude ore . . . turned into one of the prime factors of the world's wealth. But another thought came with this, at the sight of dark, brawny men moving here and there, with the wild

glare of molten cinder and liquid metal falling upon their black faces and reeking forms. They were no longer simple husbandmen, companions of unfretted Nature." This is a hint of the change which every philosophic observer foresees coming upon the laboring class of the South in thousands upon thousands.

27. What we do, therefore, for their uplifting into a purer Christian life should be done now. The work should be crowded with all possible speed. We should prosecute it as men gather in their ripe harvests when a thunder-storm lowers in the horizon. Humanly speaking, the chances of its success will never be greater; the obstacles to it will never be less.

28. Another critical feature in the exigency arises from the fact that, in the person of the freedman, Republican government in many of the Southern States is practically suspended.

We have given suffrage to the negro; but the ballot in his hands is too often waste-paper. Wherever his vote would affect the issue of an election, he understands that he deposits it at the risk of his life. Minorities have silenced majorities. Most significantly does Mr. Cable speak of "the Silent South." Silence is it, like that of a man whose eye looks into the barrel of a burglar's revolver.

29. In such a condition of things, two questions come unbidden to every thoughtful observer. One is, How long can the Republic stand such a glaring outrage upon its first principles of consti-

tutional law? The other is, How long will six millions of an injured race bear the humiliation of such enormous wrong?

30. The problem is complicated by the fact that the Southern whites are obeying irrepressible instincts. What is it that has kept us of the North in a state of acquiescent silence in the face of political revolution? Why do we look through our fingers on this violence which has thrust down majorities and sent minorities to the top? The reason is the silent conviction that the Southern whites are acting *naturally*. Immeasurable as the wrong is, it is not an unnatural wrong. It would be an anomaly, unknown in civil history, if they acted otherwise.

Let us face this thing as it is, and commit no pharisaic impertinence by arrogating to ourselves superior virtue. It is very easy to thresh the misdeeds of other men. But the fact is, in this case, that Massachusetts or Connecticut would do the same thing under the same conditions. Not in the same way, but in ways constitutional and decorous, the end would be made sure, that the servile race should not lord it over the master race. It is expecting too much of human nature to turn the whole framework of society upside down and command it to remain so. Man is not made to walk on his head. Neither is civilized society so constituted that ignorance and vulgarity and thriftless poverty can assume dominion over intelligence and culture and wealth and historic pride and — *keep*

it. Only standing armies from outside can long hold the government of great States, with a proud history behind them, in the hand of the servile race over the master race. To administer government in such a *bouleversement*, you must station a soldier with fixed bayonet at every man's door. Even then, government would be law against nature. In such an antagonism, law would stand no chance. Law or no law, the reactionary somersault must come. The body politic must spring again into its natural posture, and stand on its feet with head erect and eyes looking straight on.

31. The anomaly here indicated has been the result of our policy of reconstruction. I do not say that it was the fault of either race, but it surely was the misfortune of both races, that the liberty of the slave did not *grow*. It came leaping from the cannon's mouth. Citizenship did not come to him by his own act; it was imposed from outside. He did not take it with his own right hand; it was put into his left hand from behind. Everybody knew that he was not fit for it, but nobody knew what else to do. It was the forlorn necessity of the crisis. The gift, therefore, carried with it none of the dignity and the consciousness of power to use and to defend it which belong to a liberty and a citizenship which are the growth of time, and of political training by great events, and of determined self-assertion. In the nature of things, it could not be that five millions of a servile people should come into the right of free citizenship in

such a left-handed way, without loading the political system growing out of the revolution, with anomalies in law and contradictions in practice. We never strike Nature a blow without feeling a return blow. So we find it.

32. But what has all this to do with the evangelizing of the negro? Just this — that the evangelizing of the negro opens the only way out of the perilous *imbroglio* of Southern government. We have but one thing to do, to save the Republic to either race. It is to take the freedman as he is, and *make* him a citizen in *character* as he is in law. He must be educated up to the level of his political rights by an intelligent discharge of his political duties. Thus, and not otherwise, can he acquire the power to appreciate those rights and to defend them. Let him share in the intelligence and the culture and the industrial thrift of the white race, in proportion to his capacity, and in the same proportion he will share with them in the government of States. His rights will be his when he *takes* them by force of character; never till then. Character will then take the place of color as the badge of distinction, and honor will crown worth. We need not be greatly disturbed by the vows of Southern whites, that they will not permit the freedman to have the right of suffrage. Thinking men will do what they must do.

33. But to achieve this we must work at the religious end of the enterprise. The theory of missions has become a science. One of its axioms

is that civilization is a sequence, not an antecedent, of evangelization. The most facile way to uplift men to the level of civil freedom is first to Christianize them. A robust type of Christianity must supplant the diseased and crippled nondescript which they have now. Then the gifts and graces of an advanced civilization will follow.

This work has been magnificently begun. Few enterprises of the American Church have so much to show in results for twenty years of labor. But it has now reached a point of complication with Southern politics and industries at which it needs to be expedited with all possible speed. Republican freedom degenerates rapidly with disuse of republican principles. Half-civilized natures rapidly grow sullen and revengeful under the burning sense of injustice. The safety of both races from internecine conflict depends on the quick working of spiritual remedies. We have no time to lose. It will not do to prosecute the work conveniently. We cannot afford to prosecute it with conservative dignity. Mr. Cable strikes the keynote of Christian as well as of political endeavor when he reads the exhortation of conservative wisdom with a new emphasis. He writes: "*Make haste* slowly."

34. In ancient Egypt, the chief concern of a man's life was preparation for his burial. The chief ambition of a sovereign was to build his tomb. Of mechanic arts, masonry and embalming were the most honorable — the one to build a resting-

place for a corpse, and the other to delay its dissolution. Usages of society, the names of streets, anniversary customs, were suggestive first of the death-scene and the grave. Diodorus Siculus says: "The Egyptians call the dwellings of the living 'lodgings,' because they are only occupied for a short time. The tombs they call 'eternal houses,' because the occupants never left them."

Egyptian life is an emblem of the whole world's thinking upon death. Less demonstratively, and for the most part secretly, men are all embalmers and undertakers. Arts now lost were employed in the construction of the pyramids, but the world has not lost the thought which built them. No other thought has ever gained such absolutely universal sway over the human mind.

35. Critics of Shakespeare have observed the fact that there is not to be found in his dramas a solitary line expressive of even so much as a philosophical toleration of the prospect of death. The only feeling respecting it which he has put into the mouths of men is that of passionate abhorrence. In "Measure for Measure," Claudio, appealing to his sister, is made to say: —

> "The weariest and most loathéd worldly life
> That age, ache, penury, and imprisonment
> Can lay on nature, is a paradise
> To what we fear of death!"

This is the conception of the "myriad-minded" poet, who is thought to have conceived more profoundly and variously than any other man the

inner life of the human soul. In this respect Shakespeare was not a Christian. He seems to have known nothing of the light with which Christianity has illumined the grave.

36. The unnaturalness of death in the system of things is symbolized by the sympathy of the brute creation with man's antipathy to it and dread of its coming. An ox will low mournfully over the pool of blood from the veins of its kin. The poor dumb being finds in the phenomenon the same tragic mystery that we do. He protests against it as a thing which is at war with Nature.

37. "That man lies," said the Duke of Wellington, "who says that he never feared to die." Marshall Montluc of the French army acknowledged that he was often overcome with fear in battle, and could not get possession of himself till he had said a prayer. I once asked a soldier of the Army of the Potomac if he supposed that the men of the rank and file ever prayed? "I believe," said he, "that every man of us did when we went into action."

In presence of such testimony, when Swedenborg tells us that Charles the Twelfth of Sweden did not know what that is which we call fear, we must be permitted to shrug our shoulders. Probably the certainty of coming dissolution causes more of suppressed dejection than any and all other facts in the experience of men. It raises with more oppressive doubt the question, "Is a life worth living which must have such an ending?"

38. We need a certain *military* element in our mental conquest of death. No other fear balances it among all human forebodings. Faith in a risen and ascended Christ should be such as to enable us to fling off our natural horror, as we do a tangled and terrific dream on awaking. Such was one of the martial virtues of St. Paul. Probably few men have ever lived, though trained at the cannon's mouth, who really cared so little about dying as he did. Yet he does not seem to have raised himself to meet it by the dead lift of will or in shame at secret fears. He lived in the military *state* of victory over its terrors. All that he has to say of it has the ring of sovereignty. It was the natural sequence of his faith in our Lord's resurrection.

39. In the popular notions of death, it is doubtful whether the Christian or the pagan element predominates. The dying words of Rabelais were: "I am going to meet the great Perhaps." What is this but the "If" inscribed on the portals of the temple of Delphi? Have two thousand years of Christian culture done nothing for us, that we must now go back to pagan oracles? Yet is there not much in our funeral usages and accompaniments which Socrates would have deemed unworthy of an ancient Spartan?

40. In some respects the first Christian ages were not superior to ours; but in their conceptions of death they were so. Our belief in immortality is more philosophical than theirs; theirs

was more Christian than ours. The resurrection of Christ was to them the one stupendous fact of all time. It gave to death a new meaning and clothed it with new associations in human thought. The original significance of it as the exponent of sin and of God's displeasure was blotted out. A new conception of it was introduced into Christian Hymnology. The catacombs to-day bear witness that that event wrought a revolution in Christian thought which illumined the whole heavens. No other revolution in history can bear comparison with this in the metamorphosis wrought by it in the popular ideas of the end of this life and the promise of another. When did ever any other religion create a literature in which death-songs were so jubilant and triumphant?

41. The analogies of Nature are in league with revelation in its contradiction of our pagan notions of dying. They teach that the passage to another life must in the natural order of things be a transition to a higher and a nobler life. Things superannuated and effete are forerunners of things nascent and young. One thing passes away that a better thing may be. Species give place to superior species. Evolution is upward. Such is the latest and grandest faith of science.

This law of an ascending grade in the evolution of Nature is but the type of the law of resurrection and ascension in spiritual destiny. Terrestrial bodies are the precursors of bodies celestial. The new being is a nobler being. New faculties open

upon new researches. Discovery springs to new opportunities. The spirit of the man goeth upward. The comparative reticence of revelation on the subject is the most suggestive thing we know of it. It hints at unutterable possibilities. It encloses inconceivable certainties. Eye hath not seen nor ear heard them.

42. The dread of death must in the nature of things be most oppressive in a materialistic age. This is a magnificent world. A man must have had a very sad life in it, who would not be content, under existing conditions, to abide here forever. Add to its material resources the attachment which habit creates, and you have bonds almost invincible, to bind us all to its exceeding loveliness. This world is home. A materialistic faith has nothing to give us which can balance the grim fact that we must leave it, and go — whither?

The well-known remark of Dr. Johnson to Garrick who was showing off his splendid house and grounds: "Ah! David, these are the things that make death terrible!" has probably found its way in substance to the mind of every man whose life has been successful, as the world counts success.

Christianity is worth believing, were it for nothing else than its revelation of an antidote to the fact of death. And its glory is that it discloses a world of spiritual resources of which this world, with all its resplendent beauty and home-likeness,

is but a remote and inadequate emblem. In the Christian theory of life the chief use of this world is to be a symbol of the world to come.

43. In those phenomena of Nature which confirm the teachings of revelation respecting another life, the condescension of God has been marvellously considerate of human weakness. The most impressive of the natural emblems of resurrection from the grave are not locked up in recondite realms of science. They are not a treasure of learning only. He has written them in the commonest phenomena which a child may interpret. Why is the sunrise a diurnal spectacle? Is it not in part to give us every morning a resplendent symbol of the resurrection of the dead? Why is sleep made a daily necessity to the recuperation of life? Is it not partly that we may realize to our imagination the waking from the grave? Why are the alternations of summer and winter so faithful? Is it not that the springtime may give us proclamation, as from other worlds, of the reality of another life? The moral uses of these natural phenomena poetry has interpreted more appreciatively often than religious faith.

44. Does real life discover any basis for that negation of a Divine providence which affirms the existence of "lucky" and "unlucky" men in their vocations? John Jacob Astor is reported to have said: "I never have anything to do with unlucky men. I have known clever men, very clever men,

who have no shoes to their feet. I fight shy of them."

One thing is patent on the face of this theory. The *moral* argument is against it. It is the theory of concentrated, Satanic selfishness. The maxims of commerce contain nothing more malevolent within the circle of ideas which respectable men dare to profess. We are safe in spewing it out of a Christian civilization, as offensive to God and man.

45. The facts of life, when thoroughly investigated, falsify the theory. The very large majority of the "unlucky men" are such by reason of some maladjustment of faculty to vocation. They are the victims of unwise choices. Men enter a profession who ought to learn a trade. Men engage in commerce who ought to be tillers of the soil. For sanitary reasons, some can succeed in nothing without life in the open air. Multitudes of men are born with aspirations above their abilities. They have the tastes of leadership without the power to lead. Sons follow the employments of their fathers, without the pluck and self-discipline of the fathers. They insist on beginning where their fathers left off. Innumerable are these maladaptations of men to things. Multitudes of men therefore belong to Sydney Smith's classification of round men in square holes, and square men in round holes.

46. Further, men are often "unlucky" through neglect of their ante-natal history. They do not

inquire what is the vocation which the blood runs to. No man can fit himself for conspicuous success in an employment to which he has no proclivities inherited. A man must be born to something, to make a great success of anything.

47. Many of the defeated men represent their family stock at the period when it is caving in. This is the destiny, sooner or later, of all families. Rarely does eminent ability descend beyond the third generation. The remote descendants of an illustrious ancestry are apt to be as illustrious for their incompetence. They should have descended with the family stock gracefully. They should have chosen humbler callings. Often the son of a Senator should have been a clerk in the Post Office. The grandson of a Chief Justice should make shoes. The son of a millionnaire must often be a book-keeper in the palatial store in which his father made the fortune that the son has lost. The ancestral line always, sooner or later, runs on an inclined plane. He that is wise will discover this seasonably, and make the best of it gracefully.

48. Multiform are these failures of faculty to interlock with birth and circumstance and time and opportunity. It is as unphilosophical as it is irreverent to charge the failures of unsuccessful men upon the disabilities or the ill-will of Providence. Yet this is the folly and the crime which are covered under a flippant name in the theory of "ill-luck." It is not necessary that all men should achieve what the world calls success. A descent in life

from the higher to a lower plane is often a nobler fortune than the reverse. The material decline is a spiritual ascent. Alas! how often is it better to enter another world halt and maimed by the defeated wrestlings of this world! He is the wise man who, under life's failures, enters into God's silence and waits there.

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